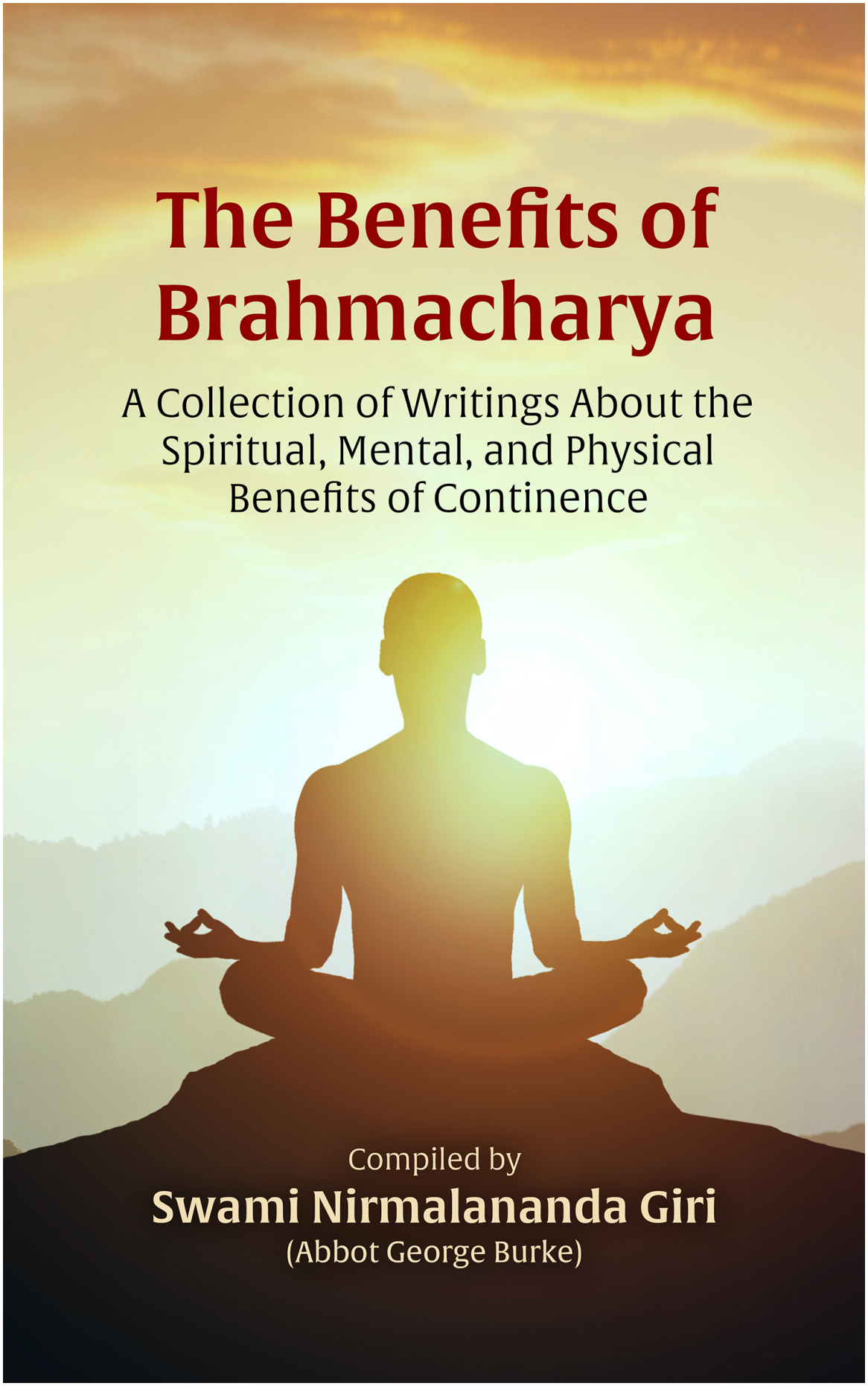
The Benefits of Brahmacharya

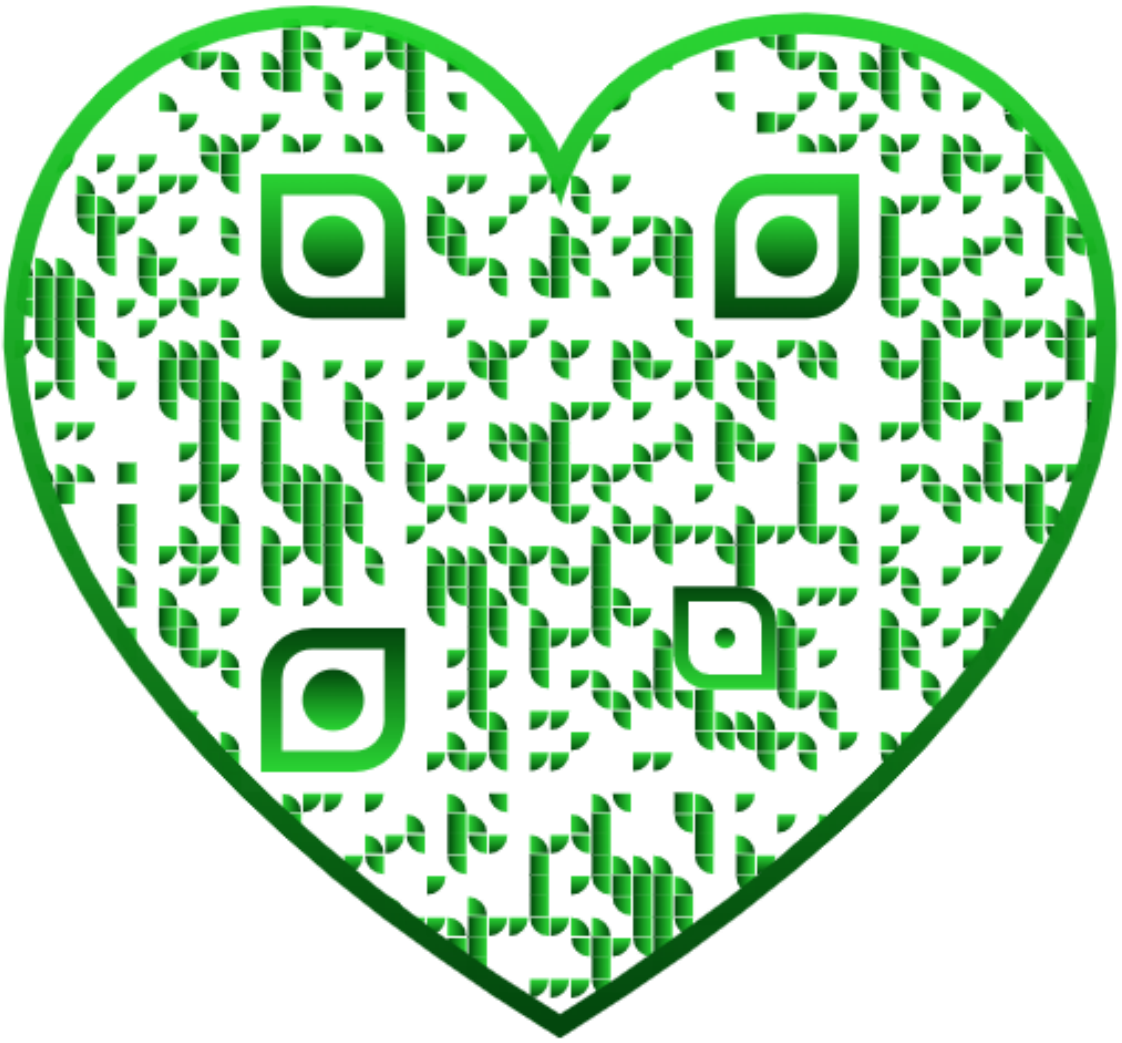
A Collection of Writings About the Spiritual, Mental, and Physical Benefits of Continence



Compiled by

Swami Nirmalananda Giri

(Abbot George Burke)



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Compiled by Abbot George Burke
(Swami Nirmalananda Giri)

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Introduction

by

Swami Nirmalananda Giri (Abbot George Burke)

What is brahmacharya? *A Brief Sanskrit Glossary* defines it: "Continence; self-restraint on all levels; discipline; dwelling in Brahman." *Sanskrit Glossary of Yogic Terms* by Swami Yogakanti gives this very excellent definition: "Conduct suitable for proceeding to the highest state of existence, especially continence or absolute control of sensual impulses."

There are two forms of brahmacharya: 1) Absolute *abstention* from any form of sexual activity in mind and body. This is the mandatory brahmacharya not only of the monastic, but also of the unmarried–male or female. 2) Absolute *control* of any form of sexual activity in mind and body on the part of both husband and wife. Marriage is not a license for uncontrolled sexual activity–as the mood takes (seizes) either the husband or wife. Rather it must be always under the intelligent will of them both.

By the mercy and grace of God I am not a marriage counselor in any form, so the foregoing is all I have to say in essence. But it is up to the husband and wife who aspire to higher consciousness to realize that observance of Yama and Niyama are absolutes for the aspiring yogi. Known quite reasonably as The Ten Commandments of Yoga every yogi must seek to embody them. Here are their listing from *A Brief Sanskrit Glossary*.

Niyama: Observance; the five Do's of Yoga: 1) Shaucha: purity, cleanliness; 2) Santosha: contentment, peacefulness; 3) Tapas: austerity, practical (*i.e.*, result-producing) spiritual discipline; 4) Swadhyaya: self-study, spiritual study; 5) Ishwarapranidhana: offering of one's life to God.

Yama (1): Restraint; the five Don'ts of Yoga: 1) ahimsa–non-violence, non-injury, harmlessness; 2) satya–truthfulness, honesty; 3) asteya–non-stealing, honesty, non-misappropriativeness; 4) brahmacharya–continence; 5) aparigraha–non-possessiveness, non-greed, non-selfishness, non-acquisitiveness. These five are called the Great Vow (Observance, Mahavrata) in the Yoga Sutras.

Since brahmacharya is one of the components of the Great Vow all yogis must give it serious and unbiased consideration. Between themselves the husband and wife should discuss and decide what their form of brahmacharya will entail. And there must be some form of brahmacharya–that is evident. The form must be agreeable to both and must be honest–neither some exaggerated form of observance miserable to both or some lax, virtual non-observance that is cowardly, weak and hypocritical.

Let me give an example of what I mean by the wrong form. Fasting is not eating for a period of time. There is both fasting with abstinence from water, or fasting done

with the drinking of water. That is the whole matter. No food of any form is eaten But many years ago I read of a minister who made a big to-do of his "fasting." And here is what it was. When he sat down at the table he would look at the array of dishes and choose one that he would not eat. Then he would eat all he wanted of the other dishes. That is not fasting. And there is no point in doing the same kind of thing in relation to brahmacharya.

As this book demonstrates, there are great benefits from the observance of brahmacharya. But it must be genuine and sincere. It is better to forget the whole thing than try to fool oneself and others–including God. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay" (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5).

The Role of Celibacy in Spiritual Life

An Interview with Swami Chidananda, President of the Divine Life Society.

Swami Chidananda Saraswati was a disciple of Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. He succeeded him as President of the Divine Life Society in Rishikesh, India in 1963, after his death. He was well known in India as a yogi and spiritual leader, and a worthy embodiment of the teachings of Swami Sivananda.

Question: Celibacy or brahmacharya has always been given a prominent place in the spiritual life, and we know that both Swami Sivananda and yourself have subscribed to its importance. Why is celibacy important and what is its role in the spiritual life?

Swamiji: One of the reasons for its importance is that we have received as part and parcel of our heritage from our spiritual past the concept and view of celibacy being a basic requirement, a prerequisite, of spiritual life. And this concept and view has continued to have a certain recognition over many, many centuries during which time Indian society has changed, and many other old concepts have been discarded.

The normal Hindu has always been progressive. He has never hesitated to change if he felt that the change would enhance his knowledge and take him in a better direction. And in coming into contact with views and knowledge from other societies, there has been an ongoing reappraisal of our ancient concepts and views. In spite of this we find that the concept of brahmacharya and its having an important role to play in the spiritual life has continued. It has stood the test of time; it has become time-honored.

Had it not been something of enduring value, it would also have changed. But it has not. As it used to be regarded thousands of years ago, so is it regarded even today amongst spiritual teachers, gurus and yogis–with the same attitude of its being a necessary and important thing.

So, even though Swami Sivananda was very broad-minded and up-to-date in his outlook, a modern sage–a prophet of the new age, as they say–he never hesitated to stick to tradition if he found that it had something of permanent value. He was most flexible, and he also could be inflexible. And that is his disciple also, Swami Chidananda, for the same reason. [Both Swamis Sivananda and Chidananda were medical doctors. *Editor*.]

Another reason I have always been an advocate of celibacy is that the towering spiritual personalities who have been a molding influence in my life ever since I can remember–personalities like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh–were all people who swore by celibacy. They were people who said that it is most important, indispensable. So naturally, when these people who were the source of my inspiration in the spiritual life were so forthright and absolutely clear–they didn't seem to have any doubt about it–I said, well, this is it! So that decided the

matter for me in my approach to the life spiritual.

Brahmacharya or celibacy is a rational process of preserving and conserving precious energy so that it can be utilized in other very essential and indispensable functions. And if it is preserved like this, it can be converted, just as tangible, gross water is converted into subtle steam. Then it can do wonders. A river may not have much power in it by itself. You may be easily able to row or swim across it. But, if it is dammed up and its waters conserved, then it has the power, when properly channelled, to turn huge turbines and produce electricity. The hot sun, even in summer, does not normally cause a fire, but if you concentrate its rays through a lens, those rays will immediately burn whatever they are focused on. That is what celibacy actually is.

Now, the interesting question is: What is the origin, the source, of this energy? After years and years of theory and discovery, modern physicists have arrived at the conclusion that what exists in nature is not palpable or solid matter as such. It is energy, energy that fills the entire cosmos, all space. Everything that exists is filled with unutterable energy, energy which takes so many forms.

Everything that you see here, every force derives from that ultimate source of cosmic energy.

And our ancients have said that it is this cosmic energy that holds the heavenly bodies in their course. They are all kept moving by this mysterious, inexplicable, indescribable, unimaginable energy. And they regarded that energy as something divine, something that has neither a beginning nor an end. It is eternal and pervades everywhere. There is nowhere that it is not. And it is this energy which not only keeps this universe going but countless such universes, that is present in living beings as the sex force.

So Hindus regarded this energy as sacred, something that is worthy of being worshipped, not frittered away. They said that this energy is none other than the manifestation of the Divine Mother, the cosmic energy. Therefore, it should be regarded with reverence.

This cosmic force manifests in our own system as prana (vital energy, life force). And prana is the precious reserve of the seeker. Any sense activity or sense experience consumes a lot of prana. And the activity that consumes the greatest amount of prana is the sex act. Gurudev has put it very strongly: "It shatters the entire nervous system." Because it creates great excitement, great agitation, and such an intensity of feeling that as an aftermath it leaves the person exhausted and depleted.

The highest of all goals in human life–spiritual attainment–requires the maximum available pranic energy on all levels: mental, intellectual and emotional. It is through prana that one has to restrain one's senses. It is through prana that one has to still the restless activity of the mind. It is through prana that one has to centralize all the scattered rays of the mind and make it one-pointed in concentration. It is through prana that one has to direct the concentrated mind upon the object of meditation.

Prana is required for spiritual reflection and discrimination. The thinking must be sharp and the intellect penetrating. To understand the inner implications of a guru's instructions requires a special type of intelligence. You may be a very intellectual

person, and you may immediately grasp the language meaning of something the guru is telling you, but if the guru is speaking of an abstruse subject not within the normal range of your ordinary human experience, you require a special subtle type of understanding. And that understanding develops through brahmacharya.

So as I said, all these various practices require the use of prana, and celibacy insures that an abundance of pranic reserve is available to the seeker. So viewed from this angle, it is a rational and very positive process.

Many orthodox Hindus have said that you can worship God, want to have union with Him, to attain His vision, but still marry and lead a normal life. But our ancients also knew that that is not an easy path, because there are so many distractions, so many pressures, so many tensions, so many demands made upon the person in family life, that to give yourself wholly and totally to God–well, anything may be possible, but not this.

You cannot serve God and Mammon. Mammon sums up the worldly life, earthly life. Because, if you marry, you want mammon. Without mammon you cannot look after your household, keep the home fires burning, the pot boiling, and do everything that is necessary. Only the married person knows all that he has to do. Therefore, they said that renunciation of the earthly life is necessary to go whole hog into the spiritual quest; and the entire energy potential is also necessary if you really and truly mean to make the supreme effort to throw yourself entirely into the spiritual pursuit and its necessary disciplines.

Gurudev Swami Sivananda himself built his intense penance and austerity in yoga practice upon the basis of brahmacharya. So what he spoke about was a leaf from his own book of life. He had had a brief episode of a householder's life way back when he was in Malaysia as a doctor, and perhaps that also must have given him, being a doctor, an idea of how much expending of energy it constitutes. So all the more his comparative experience confirmed him in the belief of the importance of brahmacharya for the yogi and the spiritual person.

This is the rationale behind celibacy. If you conserve this vital energy and divert it to the spiritual process of contemplation, philosophical study and reflection, and meditation, it becomes successful, because you have concentrated your force and you are able to direct the concentrated force by focusing it upon your spiritual practices. If it is preserved, concentrated and diverted into a specific channel, it works wonders.

There is another reason why brahmacharya is important. I am not now talking about exceptional persons who have a sudden illumination and then they are once and for all lifted from the gross physical plane of body consciousness into another, never to return back. In one moment of illumination, Ramana Maharshi became established in "I am neither mind nor body, Immortal Self am I. I have neither time nor space, I was never born." In one split second–one moment he was just an ordinary student and then suddenly he knows that he is what the Bhagavad Gita describes as: "Fire cannot burn you; water cannot wet you; weapons cannot injure you; wind cannot dry you. You are unborn, permanent, eternal, beyond time. Death is nothing to you." He became established once and for all in that experience, and he never budged from that state. All

his life, no matter what was going on around him, it did not touch him. It did not affect him. I am not talking about such people.

Vedanta long ago probed into this subject of the human situation, and the sages saw clearly that 999 persons out of every 1000 or 9,999 out of every 10,000 were completely caught up in a state of "I am this body." They knew of their identity only as a physical entity, a being with hands and feet and ears and eyes, eating, drinking, sleeping, talking, doing things. So they are totally body-bound. Their consciousness is held upon the level of the physical body.

This is the situation. But the goal of the spiritual seeker is Cosmic Consciousness, which is their inner reality beyond time, space, name and form. So, when you juxtapose their present state of consciousness and the experience they wish to attain, you can just imagine how impossible this would be if they go on perpetuating this total identification with the physical body and all its processes.

Among all these bodily processes, most have become mechanical. Most people are not intensely aware of eating, drinking, sleeping, voiding. All these things have become automatic. But the one process that most of them purposefully engage in, with great desire for it–wanting it, thinking about it, planning for it and going after it–is sex enjoyment, which means that this is a process that concentrates their entire consciousness, entire mind, entire attention upon the physical, their physical identity. From one angle the sex act is the acme of physicality or animality. It is a process that perforce directs your entire attention upon the physical, and even more, the full focusing of your desire and intention upon that part of your physical nature that you share in common with the entire animal kingdom. Is this going to be in any way helpful for attaining Cosmic Consciousness?

So here is a human being, the crown and glory of God's creation, high above all the rest of the living species, going down to the gross, physical, material animal level and giving oneself totally to it–seeking it, wanting it, going after it, doing everything one can in order to obtain it, indulging in it, and wanting to have it always available. That means that one is voluntarily binding oneself down to a level of physical consciousness.

If you are a spiritual seeker, can you not see that you are working against yourself? You have to liberate your consciousness from the lesser levels and go on lifting it to progressively higher and higher levels of finer and more refined states. For if the whole of the spiritual process of illumination and enlightenment is a process of rising into a higher state of consciousness, it automatically implies liberating yourself from a lower state of consciousness. If you want to move northward it means moving away from the south.

And one of the things that helps you to free yourself from being caught in this physical level is celibacy. Cosmic Consciousness, Absolute Consciousness, is a far cry if you don't recognize the necessity of liberating yourself from your total identification with the body.

Question: Are there particular stages in the spiritual life when celibacy becomes especially important or even essential?

Swamiji: Yes and no. From one point of view, celibacy forms the very foundation,

and the foundation is not any later stage of a constructive process. It is the very first stage, the ABC stage. So we may say that it is not at *some* stage that it becomes important or indispensable, but that it is essential right from the very beginning.

Question: If you wanted to call it a stage, then it means you'd call it the stage where you start taking the spiritual lift seriously.

Swamiji: Yes, seriously–when you say it and you mean what you say. If your aspiration is to be authentic and genuine, and if the aspiration is to take the form of an all-out commitment towards the spiritual experience and an all-out effort to move in that direction, then you must keep moving only in that direction. You cannot run after two things. Because then it will be taking one step forward and one step backwards, and you will never really progress.

The spiritual life starts with your recognition that as long as you keep going headlong in the pursuit of sense satisfaction and pleasure, you are not going to move one step. So all will be academic and theoretical. Our aspiration, our wanting spiritual life will only be in theory–a fancy and a feeling. You have not started. So the beginning stage itself of the spiritual life is a turning away from sense experience and sense indulgence and starting to move in the opposite direction.

It is perhaps precisely for this reason that Maharshi Patanjali put brahmacharya right at the very commencement of his eight-stage Raja Yoga and not at any later stage. It is one of the five vows that constitute the first stage. If he had thought that it was only important or essential at a later stage, he would have brought it in at the third or fourth stage. But no, he did it at the very beginning.

Swami Sivananda used to say: "Brahmacharya is the basis of immortality." And in many places in the Upanishads it says: "Wisdom experience cannot come to one who has not his senses under restraint and who has not controlled the vagaries of his wandering mind."

So I believe that it is not at *some* stage, but it is there *all* of the spiritual life. Because spiritual life is a transcendence of your human nature, human consciousness. And if it is a transcendence, you have to leave behind all that constitutes your human nature, your physicality. You will have to commence with it and keep on with it. You view celibacy in a positive manner, not as something anti-nature. You do not at all feel that you are doing any violence to yourself.

Finally, from a purely scientific and technical point of view, one of the yogas where celibacy is absolutely essential and indispensable is kundalini yoga. There is no compromise with that. Right from the beginning it is absolutely essential and indispensable. Otherwise it is dangerous to go into kundalini yoga which is based upon pranayama and many mudras, bandhas and asanas.

That's the "no" part of the answer.

The "yes" part is to state that in the total context of spiritual life in India, there are certain stages and states where one can be highly spiritual and yet at the same time be leading a normal sex life. That is true especially in the bhakti path–people who are following the path of love of God, devotion, prayer and worship, chanting the Divine Name, singing His glories. This path does not make any distinction between a celibate

brahmachari, a married householder, and a retired couple living a spiritually oriented life after they have finished their duties as householders.

So the path of devotion seems to be a dimension of spiritual life in India where total celibacy in its sense of absolute abstinence is not insisted upon. It is not looked upon with disfavor, but it is not insisted upon either. But because the sexual act consumes a great amount of pranic energy, naturally self-restraint is also important. And promiscuous sex was never countenanced, never looked upon with favor. So a sort of celibacy in the form of self-control and fidelity in your sexual relationship with your recognized legal partner can also be regarded as brahmacharya. Here, the husband looks upon all other women as mothers. He has only one woman and that is his lawfully wedded wife. He is what is called an eka-patni-vrata husband, one who has taken the vow of a single wife. There is no question of having a mistress or of even thinking of another woman. And the wife bases her life on the vow of pati-vrata. In a total sense, she has only one partner in life. All other men are like her children; she has the feeling of motherhood in her heart towards all other men except her husband. So here the sex life does not in any way go contrary to spiritual life.

And this has been the case with ever so many devotees, lovers of God, and spiritual India lacks no example of them. Throughout India we have seen the phenomenon of large communities of ecstatic devotees of God, many or most of whom have been married people, living a normal sex life, but nevertheless absorbed in divine love of God. So, this is the "yes" portion. In this stage sexuality seems not in any way forbidden or incompatible with spiritual life.

Question: I presume that Vedantic enquiry, the more intellectual approach to the spiritual life, would also not be incompatible with normal married life.

Swamiji: Yes, yes. But in the Vedantic type of life, gradually, unconsciously, without even intending it on purpose, in the course of time the person would graduate to that level of consciousness where sex would begin to seem superfluous. Because it contradicts the very basic thesis of Vedanta: "I am not this body. I am not the five elements. I am not the limiting adjuncts. I am something quite distinct and different." And for that different, distinct Thing, sex has no meaning. For, It is not within the realm of physical consciousness and physical functioning.

Question: Celibacy is often seen in the modern West as an outmoded, old-fashioned practice. It is often viewed as repressive, life-denying–even antithetical to what spiritual practice is ultimately all about. Many spiritual authorities in the West are now teaching that to realize our full potential as human beings, we must embrace, rather than in any way avoid or repress, our sexuality. These views stand in stark contrast to what the great traditions have always taught. What do you think about this?

Swamiji: I don't agree with the general attitude that has just been expressed. They have failed to grasp the place of brahmacharya in the spiritual life.

It is not outmoded; it is not at all old-fashioned, and it is not repressive or life-denying. On the contrary, it is used as a plank for everlasting life, endless life. Their view of life seems to be a very, very limited and narrow view of life. This is not the only

life there is. When you come to have a little glimpse or idea of what real life is, then you will just stand amazed. This present life as such is meaningless. It is a petty trifle, a nothing, if not understood in terms of its being a take-off runway for catapulting into that greater life.

This life is a means to that great, glorious, grand end and aim of human existence which is to enter into a life that is the life of God, that is one with God's life, the Kingdom of Heaven. That is the whole purpose of human existence. Human life has been given to us as a passageway to Divinity, as a passageway to everlasting life.

No person with a little religious knowledge and awareness or a spiritual view will ever deny the validity of brahmacharya. It is something scientific and a scientific thing never gets outmoded or old-fashioned. Brahmacharya is neither avoiding sexuality nor repressing sexuality. It is giving the go-by to sexuality so that the potential and the power of the sexual process can now be used for something so wonderful that sex pales into insignificance in contrast.

So brahmacharya is neither repressing sexuality nor avoiding sexuality. It is just bypassing sexuality–making use of this sexual potential for something ten times, a hundred times greater. Therefore, the question of repression and suppression is a misnomer. It is due to a lack of proper understanding of what the real spiritual quest is. If it is understood, then these terms will not be used. We are not just human beings; we are more than human beings. Our human status is only a pale reflection of what we really are. The only reason our human status acquires some meaning and significance is because if it is properly utilized, it can raise us up and take us into that which is our own, bring us into the Kingdom–to which we have a birthright.

If you want to understand the practice of celibacy through an analogy that is within the thought forms of today, consider an athlete whose great ambition is to win a gold medal at the Olympics. He will willingly put himself into the hands of a trainer, and if the trainer says, "No more late night revelry, no more sex, no more junk food, no more alcohol," the athlete readily agrees. He says: "I'll agree to this and more also if you want it." Why? Because he wants the gold medal. And no one raises an eyebrow, no one is outraged. Why? Because the gold medal justifies all these so-called "inhibitions." You cannot say that he's doing violence to or repressing himself, because he is not looking at it that way. He is willing to do anything that the trainer demands of him. It is not imposed upon him by other people. We understand why he is doing it and we accept it.

However, in one way the idea in the West that brahmacharya is suppression is not entirely off the mark. If one represses or suppresses some inherent natural force or faculty, it can bring about undesirable changes in the personality. If brahmacharya is forced upon an individual against the individual's inclination and will, abnormal conditions naturally may result, because the person is being compelled to do something that deep within himself or herself the person does not want to do compelled by others, by social restraint or by taking up vows that he or she ought not to have taken before having well considered exactly what it implied.

But if an intelligent person, having deeply pondered the whole basis of life, says:

"When I want to achieve something great, something mighty, I cannot afford to deplete the energies that I have. The more I conserve, the more I can divert into that achievement and the greater the chance of succeeding." So thinking and having understood the rationale of it and fully appreciating the ultimate achievement it would lead to, if he or she voluntarily, willingly and with great enthusiasm undertakes celibacy, where comes the question of suppression?

On the contrary, what appears to be a sort of denial is actually giving full self-expression to a higher dimension of your being into which you have now placed yourself. So, far from denying self-expression, it is giving full expression to yourself because you are no longer identified with the lesser aspect of your total personality. You are identified with the higher aspect. It is a sort of a liberation and evolution to a higher level. It is something positive, creative, and not anything negative. It is not a denial but an actual expression of yourself in the form of a keen aspiration and a noble ambition.

When it constitutes such a process, then Freud and the others are off the mark. They have never visualized such a situation, such a possibility. But it is not only a possibility, it is a tradition of centuries, of millennia–someone being prepared to do anything, give anything, pay any price for the attainment of the Highest.

Question: Tantra or the Practice of "Sacred Sexuality," is becoming very popular in the West today. Do you think these teachings offer an authentic spiritual path?

Swamiji: No, I do not think that these teachings offer an authentic spiritual path. Why? Because of human frailty, human weakness. The human mind is so made that it always takes the path of least resistance. It always wants the easy way.

Tantra is an approach to God through all types of sense enjoyment. Everything is offered to God and so everything becomes sanctified; nothing is profane. One enjoys sense satisfaction and sees it also as part of God's bliss. There is a view, and it has something to it, that while in all human experiences duality persists–there is an "I am enjoying this object" feeling–that in the ultimate sexual experience between a truly loving male, intensely in love with the female and fully reciprocated by the female, there is no consciousness of one's separate individuality. There is a total fusion of the separatist consciousness in each one, and there is only the awareness of bliss experience. There is no experiencer. They say this is a possibility when it is done to its perfection. The two cease to be and there is only one, non-dual experience, Existence Absolute, Brahmic consciousness. So they say that the human body is an instrument that, if properly made use of, can bring about a rising above body consciousness.

For one in a million it may click.

The pursuit of pleasure is part of the Western view of life–not the denial of pleasure. And one teacher in ten may be an authentic teacher genuinely offering something suited to the Western temperament. But nine of them are very shrewd people. They know there is a market for this, and they are wise to it. The approach is: You can have your cake and eat it too.

Mind you, this was an authentic path that did once upon a time exist in India, especially in the Eastern part. Even now it exists. But it became grossly perverted.

People became enmeshed in it. They said they were practicing tantra but it was only wining, dining, and sex pleasure. It took them nowhere, but I suppose it took them where they wanted to go. So it was dubbed by enlightened people of that time as the "perverted path." Two paths then came into existence: the authentic path which was called the "right-hand path," and the perverted path which was only after enjoyment. That was called the "left-hand path."

And so the science as such exists, but there are very few authentic gurus, and it has to be strictly followed under the personal supervision of a true guru. I am likely to be accused of being uncharitable, but I believe that most purveyors of modern sacred sexuality are interested in making a profit out of it for themselves.

As I told you, the sex force is sacred; sex is sacred. It is one of the most sacred of all things. But sacred sexuality is a misnomer. Once you get enmeshed in sexuality, the sacredness is given the bye-bye. That is due to man's weakness, frailty. Therefore, I am not going to be an advocate of it.

Question: Considering the number of lapses and aberrations in those who have taken a lifelong vow of celibacy both in the West and East, do you feel that perhaps undertaking the practice should be restricted to individuals who have attained a certain degree of spiritual maturity first?

Swamiji: I wouldn't fully subscribe to this view because, first and foremost, people who have attained to a certain degree of spiritual maturity would have reached that at least partially through brahmacharya. The very fact that they have reached a certain degree of spiritual maturity indicates that brahmacharya, at least in the broader sense of the term, must have been part of their makeup or part of the way by which they ascended to that degree of maturity. And I have no hesitation in saying that the lapses and aberrations you refer to cannot lessen the validity of the concept and the tradition of brahmacharya in any way. They are solely due to the imperfection of the persons concerned.

On the other hand, before one takes a lifelong vow of celibacy one has to make sure one has a real vocation; there has to be an inner call to the life and to embrace celibacy. It cannot be a decision based on sentiment and emotional euphoria, rather it is a judgement through a rational, logical appraisal of the life. I also insist that one should not take the vow of monasticism until one is old enough to understand one's own biology and has had some experience of what one has within oneself, what one has to deal with. One has to face this squarely.

I would also suggest that a person be allowed to take the vow of lifelong celibacy only after they have been kept under observation and tutelage for some time. For example, the Ramakrishna Mission keeps a person as a pre-probationer for one full year. Then he goes through a probationary period for a minimum of eight years. Only then is he eligible to request that he be a full monastic swami. So this type of taking in, sifting and observing would perhaps obviate many of these lapses and aberrations. You only allow a person to undertake that vow after a certain period in the spiritual life.

However, even when all the conditions I have mentioned are fulfilled, extreme caution must be exercised until a stage is reached where brahmacharya is one's normal

and natural condition.

Brahman is the highest brahmachari because He is One without a second, and if you are established in Brahman, you are in that same state–where there is no second, where there is no other. There is a stage where one becomes totally devoid or free from the sex idea. There is no sex or man or woman or this or that because one's view has radically changed. Quite apart from whatever is around–the world in which one is living–one is totally changed. One's consciousness is no longer kept upon that level where these things have any meaning or relevance. When consciousness is in another place, all things are seen, perceived, but they make no difference. You look at this, you look at that; you are seeing everything, but it doesn't bring about any change in the state of your inner consciousness, which always remains the same. That is the ultimate transcendence which is a possibility and which is an ideal, which ought to be striven for and which ought to be attained. That is what the guru wants for the disciple. That is what the saints want for the ordinary man. Because, before this there is still risk of a downfall. So our saints say that until the last breath always exercise caution.

Actually, the vast, vast majority of human beings are human animals only; they are totally rooted in body consciousness. So the yogi says that their consciousness only revolves in the lowest three centers, that is food, sex and lower elimination. If some higher awakening comes and they develop compassion for others, a spirit of service, wanting to make others happy, then the consciousness occasionally manifests itself in the fourth center, the center of feeling. If the consciousness persists in the upward trend of spiritual evolution and ideal living, it can come to the vishuddha chakra where one can have many subjective experiences, visions etc., but still the experiences come and go and the consciousness moves up and down, up and down.

If consciousness rises further to the ajna chakra, one tends to be more and more stable, established, because it is the center of the mind, the psyche. But it is only when consciousness comes to the sahasrara that there is no longer a chance of a downfall. One is above body consciousness. One is not aware of oneself as a body. One does not think or feel or conceive of oneself as a physical entity at all. There is no moving down. Consciousness is firmly established. But until then there is always a need to be vigilant.

Question: What is the key to success in brahmacharya?

Swamiji: It is how you look at it!

First of all it is how you understand it. Brahmacharya is the diversion to a higher purpose and utilization of the basic, quintessential energy potential of the universe located in the individual being. It is the individualized or microcosmic aspect of the illimitable, infinite, primordial Cosmic Power that is the macrocosmic aspect or the dynamic aspect of the one non-dual Reality. As you know, the static aspect is Brahman which is the transcendental, non-dual Reality. And the kinetic or the dynamic aspect is that same thing in manifestation or expression, in movement.

The individualized aspect of this Primordial Power, located in all beings, is this latent potential for unbroken continuity of life and existence, This potential is practically everywhere. Just because you may be in a position to describe it and define it or explain it in terms of modern physics or chemistry doesn't in any way alter the

actual metaphysical or philosophical fact of its real nature. Physically you may explain it in terms of pressure etc., but that is only an explanation of something that is already a transforming, ongoing process of continuously being and becoming, being and becoming.

This creative potential, creative power, is present throughout the botanical and animal kingdoms. It is this alone that manifests as all the different forces in the individual human being–the power of acting, the power of thinking, the ability to see, hear, smell, taste, to digest, to breathe–everything. And it is this that is equally present in both sexes as the sex energy. Therefore, this being the key to life, one can imagine its importance, and one can also imagine its precious quality.

If one can understand it in this way–realize its real, sacred cosmic nature, as the microcosmic aspect of the macrocosmic shakti or Cosmic Power–one takes a healthy attitude of reverence for it. It is not something to be just spat away like spittle. A person may spend away nickels and dimes, but if he has gold coins he will not so easily part with them. So reverence is a fruit of this understanding. Furthermore, the aspirant recognizes and sees clearly: "There is something very important that I have to do. I have a great goal to achieve and I require all the energy at my disposal to put into my spiritual quest. I cannot afford to divert it into other channels in order to obtain a lesser achievement." As Swami Krishnanandaji used to say, "It is better to aim at a lion and miss it than to aim at a jackal and hit it."

So the first key to success in brahmacharya is to recognize and understand the sacred and precious nature of the energy potential one has. When one has this clear perception that it is meant to be conserved, preserved and directed towards the greatest of all attainments, then one has a desire to be a brahmachari. It is seen as a very positive process.

A second key to success, and a way of looking at both brahmacharya and the sex function, is even more fundamental, and it is one of the two factors that to a large extent have been personally utilized by me. It is to clearly perceive that first and foremost what they call the male sexual organ is not a sexual organ at all. It is only a urinary drainpipe. That is what it is, and that is its main function from the moment a child comes out of his mother's womb and sees the light of day, right up to the last breath, till one departs from this world.

Actually, if you look at it, sex is not in that part of our anatomy at all. Sex is not in the urinary organ; sex is in the mind of a person. So it is a question of your mental attitude. If you are convinced and train your mind to think of it in a sane and rational manner–it's only an elementary thing; its main purpose is not that which dominates the world and drives it crazy–then you're already free of it. It doesn't obsess you any longer because you don't think of it in the way in which most of our unfortunate human society has been made to think.

Part of the reason for the world's obsession with sex and why it has become such a big problem–premarital sex, adultery, promiscuous sex–is its exploitation by commercial interests and their advertising. To sell merchandise, they blow up the girl-meets-boy phenomenon–a girl's body is meant to be enjoyed, and therefore she has to

cultivate a body that can attract as much as possible–as if sex was the only important thing in life. They completely distort its basic purpose. The sooner that this is recognized, the easier will become the possibility of brahmacharya. Because when you come to think of it, the main function of the sex act is the important, indispensable process of procreation.

From a higher metaphysical sense the husband and wife are cooperating with the Creator for perpetuation of the species so that creation will continue. That is its main function, not the experience of enjoyment that accompanies it. That is a secondary offshoot of it. Then why was this function made so enjoyable? It had to be. The procreative function, the perpetuation of the species, was done through the sex act, and if it was not combined with a super experience of pleasure and enjoyment, no one would indulge in it, and its purpose would be nullified. So Mother Nature in all Her wisdom combined these two, namely, the sex act and pleasure.

But if the mind is diverted into higher things, automatically brahmacharya becomes easy. You can succeed in brahmacharya if the mind is totally taken up by something so wonderful, so big, it absorbs you and elevates you, and the mind is simply gripped by it. When you want an infinitely higher enjoyment, then you say: "My discarding this is not any discarding. My discarding the smaller enjoyments of the physical aspect of my being is not at all any renunciation to boast about." On the contrary, you are being shrewd and wise because you want to go after something infinitely more wonderful. It is like throwing away pieces of glass if someone says, "I'll replace them with diamonds." That is another way of looking at the whole phenomenon of celibacy from the point of view of the spiritual life and the highest attainment of illumination and enlightenment.

The third key to success is also something that I myself have used right from the very beginning, and I think it is the ultimate answer. The real secret of success in brahmacharya, the real key, is what I'm just now going to state.

The moment you begin to think that I am the Atman, unborn, nameless, formless, I have neither body nor mind, I am Satchidananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute), Self-sufficient, I am of the very nature of Bliss Absolute–if you thus totally shift your consciousness to your reality, to your essential, eternal, true identity, then, finished! Brahmacharya is no longer a problem. The problem of brahmacharya ceases to exist except only once in a while due to old impressions. If some factor outside of you happens to act as a stimulus, then an idea may come.

Mind you, it is not only what your mental-intellectual mechanism thinks about yourself, it is also your feeling about yourself. If both your thinking and feeling are elevated to such a height, elevated to that dimension–it's not only a question of height, it's a different dimension altogether–and if you move into that dimension, this lower dimension ceases to be of importance, ceases to have any impact upon you. It is there; it may function, but you are not at all affected by it in any way.

Once you start cultivating staying put in the consciousness of your own essential identity, then brahmacharya is no longer a problem. It is solved. So the ultimate key to success in brahmacharya is *atma bhava*, to become absolutely convinced that you are

something totally beyond body, mind, senses, etc. The mind, due to its habitual wrong thinking, may periodically bring in a contrary idea that "I am so and so." Be indifferent to it. Dismiss it as nonsense. Refuse to entertain it. Don't pay any attention to it. Just be. Abide in your own Self. This is the master key more than anything else.

If you want to put it in devotional terminology, there is a nice little composition by Swami Yogananda. It goes something like this: "I am the bubble, You are the sea. Let me cease to be the bubble, make me the sea." And so the devotee prays to God: "I am Your child, what You are, that I am. You are divine, so I am divine. You have no body, so I have no body. I am pure Spirit, all pervading, like You. Take me up into Your state of consciousness."

So the devotee puts it in a different way. But the ultimate key to success in brahmacharya is the Vedantic process of shifting your consciousness–rejecting the body consciousness and becoming established in your true Self-awareness as something where there is neither male, nor female, nor body, nor sex, nor personality.

Practical Aspects of Brahmacharya

Swami Nirmalananda Giri (Abbot George Burke)

"Brahmacharya is restraint of the sex organ and other senses," says Vyasa. From this we see that brahmacharya has a twofold nature: control and continence.

Control

Spirit has two aspects: consciousness and energy. Consciousness is constant, whereas energy is cyclic. It is the movement of energy that produces (and is) our experience of relativity, and it is the development of energy that is the process of evolution. Therefore the conservation and application of energy is the main determinant of success or failure in spiritual endeavor. Diffusion and dissipation of energy always weakens us. Hence brahmacharya is a vital element of Yoga, without which we cannot successfully pursue the greater life of Higher Consciousness.

"Positive emotions on the other hand actually enhance and raise our energy and physical levels," continues Vyasa. Basically, brahmacharya is conservation and mastery of all the energy systems and powers of our being. This is especially true in relation to negative emotions, for tremendous energy is expended through lust, anger, greed, envy, hatred, resentment, depression, fear, obsession, and the rest. Further, they are both the causes and the symptoms of losing self-control, a major aspect of brahmacharya. Research has shown that persons in the grip of these emotions literally breathe out vital elements of the body. For example, the breath of angry people is found to be laden with copper. So negative emotion depletes us physically as well as energetically. Positive emotions on the other hand actually enhance and raise our energy and physical levels. The cultivation of (true) love, compassion, generosity, cheerfulness, friendliness, and suchlike make us stronger and calmer–essential aspects of brahmacharya. It is noteworthy that the word "virtue" is derived from the Latin word *virtus*–power–which in turn is derived from the Sanskrit word *virya*, which means both power and strength.

"A place for everything and everything in its place," is not just a maxim of orderliness. When applied to the individual's energy systems it is the root of strength and health on all levels. Every atom of personal energy possessed by us has both a place and a purpose. To ensure correct placement and expenditure of energy is the essence of the yogic science. And brahmacharya is its foundation.

Continence

Sexuality is usually considered the main focus of brahmacharya because it has such a powerful grip and influence on the human being. It is considered that if sex is mastered, all the senses will be mastered as well. There is simply no way to convince those addicted to and enslaved by sex that continence is supreme wisdom. But a few facts can be meaningful to the sincere seeker.

The life of the senses stifles the life of the spirit by carrying away the discrimination of the intellect, as Krishna says: "When the mind is led about by the wandering senses, it carries away the understanding like the wind carries away a ship on the waters" (Bhagavad Gita 2:67). The basic life-force, the prana, is dissipated through any intense activity of the senses, thus weakening the inner being. But sexual indulgence is incalculably more destructive of consciousness than any other form of sense experience, for it expends the life-force to a degree far, far beyond that of other sense experiences. Both body and mind are depleted through sexual activity.

The Prashna Upanishad concludes: "To them alone is this brahma world, in whom austerity, chastity and truth are established" (Prashna Upanishad 1:15). The Gita speaks of the worthy yogis as being "firm in the brahmachari's vow" (Bhagavad Gita 6:14).

Perfection in brahmacharya

"On being firmly established in brahmacharya, vigor [virya] is gained." (Yoga Sutra 2:37). Virya is not ordinary physical strength, but an almost supernatural power that manifests as strength of body, mind, and spirit. When through brahmacharya the yogi's normal bodily power is conserved, a marvelous alchemical change takes place, augmenting and transmuting his energies to a level unknown to others. The truth that those who keep their bodily energies intact can accomplish whatever they will has been demonstrated for thousands of years by celibates of all lands and spiritual traditions.

Regarding the brahmachari possessed of virya, Shankara says: "He brings out great qualities without limit from himself. He has irresistible energy for all good undertakings. The sense is, that he cannot be thwarted by any obstacle." See how great spiritual reformers have changed the lives of untold thousands, their influence reaching over the world and lasting even beyond their physical life span. So great is the virya of some saints that their mere touch can heal. Sometimes the clothing they have worn or objects they have touched heal the sick and work other miracles. Virya also manifests in the brahmachari's words, giving them a power not found in those of others. As Vyasa comments on this sutra: "From the attainment of virya, he draws out invincible good qualities from himself. And when perfected in it, he becomes able to confer knowledge on pupils."

Through the accumulation of virya the powers of the mind develop beyond all bounds. Yogis have often displayed profound knowledge of subjects they had never studied, and on occasion have shown remarkable artistic abilities.

Virya affects the physical body, too. Swami Dayananda, the great Indian spiritual reformer of the nineteenth century, was once mocked by a man to whom he recommended brahmacharya for increase of bodily strength. When the man got into his horse-drawn chariot and told the driver to go on, the chariot would not move. The driver whipped the horses, but to no avail. In disgust and perplexity the man got out of the chariot and discovered Swami Dayananda holding on to its rear axle!

Twelve Pointers For Maintaining Brahmacharya

Swami Nirmalananda Giri (Abbot George Burke)

1) Daily meditation and constant japa comprise the essential foundation of brahmacharya. Those who become adept in these spiritual practices will become "urdhvareta yogis"–those in whom the sexual energies flow upward and become transmuted into spiritual energies.

2) Satsanga, the company of holy people–or at least those who are aspiring to holiness–is extremely helpful in the maintenance of brahmacharya. If you know like-minded people, then meet with them regularly for spiritual study and conversation. It is not uncommon among both Hindus and Buddhists for spiritual aspirants to meet daily for meditation.

If you do not know any other spiritual aspirants–and this is not uncommon here in the West–then keep satsanga with saints and masters by reading their lives and teachings and keeping their pictures in your home. Holy images of divine forms are also beneficial. Every day listen to spiritual music. Such music should be soothing and reflective–not the raucous banging and clanging that many shallow and worldly Christians and Hindus like. It is good to listen to devotional music, but shun merely emotional music, for it is linked to lower desires, no matter how "holy" the words.

3) Avoid asatsanga–the company of the unholy and the worldly–in the form of people who have no interest in spiritual life, as well as books, magazines, television, radio, and motion pictures that are centered on material consciousness. Absolutely avoid those things which deal with the subject of sex or depict sexually suggestive (or outright) matters or images.

4) Avoid casual association with members of the opposite sex. Never be socially alone with a member of the opposite sex. This is an absolute. Make no exceptions based on seemingly spiritual character, age, or intention. When an older woman tells you that she is your "mother," run away! The same thing applies when a man tells a woman that he is her "father." This goes on in both India and America, including close–and private–association of men with female gurus and of women with male gurus. No one knows what impulses carried over from previous lives–many even from centuries past–are lying not far beneath the surface of the conscious mind, waiting to manifest.

"Spiritual" friendships with members of the opposite sex are doors to disaster. I have seen it over and over. Even in my early teen years I watched "spiritual" associations inevitably turn into sexual associations. And that had usually been the intention from the first moment. If what I have said does not convince you, at least I have discharged my responsibility.

5) If you happen to be homosexual, then what I say above applies to both sexes. (The number of "gays" that end up fathers is remarkable. It may supposedly be cute or poignant on the movie screen, but it is tragic in real life.) In your spiritual associations try to be sure that there are always several people involved. This is a trial, but many saints and masters have coped with much worse.

6) Avoid absolutely any person or thing that argues against your aspiration to brahmacharya or tries to persuade or force you into sexuality in any form. The "just try it once/for a bit" people are worse than tigers. Run for your life–literally.

7) I have warned you about external factors that harm the life of a brahmachari, but the biggest threat or danger comes from your own mind and impulses. Ruthlessly cut off all overt or oblique thoughts of sex when they rise in your mind. Note what "innocent" subjects of thought "somehow" end up in ideas of sex and banish them the moment they appear in the future.

Again: meditation and japa are the sovereign remedies for the establishment of brahmacharya both internally and externally.

8) What about "physical needs" and "bodily urges"? Never let them be an excuse for wavering in your ideal. If you cannot master your body, how will you master your mind and become a true and worthy human being? But you must keep the body clean and pure to help you in maintaining brahmacharya.

9) Continuing the previous subject: Diet is an essential factor for the brahmachari and the yogi. Diet is a form of spiritual culture as well as physical culture. There should be total avoidance of animal protein in any form and to any degree whatsoever, and this includes dairy products. Gandhi saw over and over that animal flesh, animal fats, and dairy products were detrimental to brahmacharya, that movements of lust could be attributed to the physical effects of their use. (This also happens to be the opinion of the Eastern Orthodox Church, especially the monks who watch their minds.) Become not just a vegetarian but a vegan: Eat a diet that is free from all animal protein and fat, dairy products, sugar, and caffeine. Abstain totally from nicotine and alcohol and mind-altering substances.

To learn the scientific and practical basis of what I have advised, see the books of Dr. Michael Greger (nutritionfacts.org), Dr. Neal Barnard (http://www.nealbarnard.org) and the information put out by the Physicians Committe For Responsible Medicine (http://www.pcrm.org), Dr. Michael Klaper (http://doctorklaper.com), and Dr. McDougall (http://www.drmcdougall.com).

10. Food for the mind in the form of spiritual reading is also a tremendous help to the brahmachari. Two books are especially important for the aspiring brahmachari are: *Meditation and Spiritual Life* by Swami Yatiswarananda (order from amazon.com) and *Practice of Brahmacharya* by Swami Sivananda. This latter book can be downloaded for free from the Divine Life Society website (https://www.dlshq.org/download/).

Read the books of many traditions and teachers on spiritual life, taking what is useful and leaving aside what is not. Follow your intuition and don't get what Yogananda called "spiritual indigestion."

11. What if you fail in some area or to some degree–or completely? Just keep on

trying and be more vigilant. Do not let the ego or foolish associates or "authorities" convince you that it is hopeless, you should not even try, you will not be able, you should not force yourself or your mind, blah, blah, blah…. Multitudes of holy people have struggled, some have failed at times, but all have succeeded who persevered. So can you.

12. Finally, know that God is on your side. And remember these words of the Bhagavad Gita: "Though a man be soiled with the sins of a lifetime, let him but love me, rightly resolved, in utter devotion: I see no sinner, that man is holy. Holiness soon shall refashion his nature to peace eternal; O son of Kunti, of this be certain: the man that loves me, he shall not perish. You find yourself in this transient, joyless world. Turn from it, and take your delight in me. Fill your heart and mind with me, adore me, make all your acts an offering to me, bow down to me in self-surrender. If you set your heart upon me thus, and take me for your ideal above all others, you will come into my Being" (Bhagavad Gita 9:30-31, 33-34).

Thoughts On Brahmacharya From His Autobiography

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (died January 1948), popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi, was the famed anti-colonial nationalist, and political ethicist who employed nonviolent resistance to lead the successful campaign for India's independence from British rule and later inspire movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. Aside from his political involvement, he was known for his adoption of practical spiritual improvement through vegetarianism, non-violence, and brahmacharya.

The following is the first and second section of Chapter Sixty-One of The Story of My Experiments with Truth.

We now reach the stage in this story when I began seriously to think of taking the brahmacharya vow. I had been wedded to a monogamous ideal ever since my marriage, faithfulness to my wife being part of the love of truth. But it was in South Africa that I came to realize the importance of observing brahmacharya even with respect to my wife.

I cannot definitely say what circumstance or what book it was that set my thoughts in that direction, but I have a recollection that the predominant factor was the influence of Raychandbhai, of whom I have already written. I can still recall a conversation that I had with him. On one occasion I spoke to him in high praise of Mrs. Gladstone's devotion to her husband. I had read somewhere that Mrs. Gladstone insisted on preparing tea for Mr. Gladstone even in the House of Commons, and that this had become a rule in the life of this illustrious couple, whose actions were governed by regularity. I spoke of this to the poet, and incidentally eulogized conjugal love.

Two ideals of service

"Which of the two do you prize more," asked Raychandbhai, "the love of Mrs. Gladstone for her husband as his wife, or her devoted service irrespective of her relation to Mr. Gladstone? Supposing she had been his sister, or his devoted servant, and ministered to him the same attention, what would you have said? Do we not have instances of such devoted sisters or servants? Supposing you had found the same loving devotion in a male servant, would you have been pleased in the same way as in Mrs. Gladstone's case? Just examine the viewpoint suggested by me."

Raychandbhai was himself married. I have an impression that at the moment his words sounded harsh, but they gripped me irresistibly. The devotion of a servant was, I felt, a thousand times more praiseworthy than that of a wife to her husband. There was nothing surprising in the wife's devotion to her husband, as there was an indissoluble bond between them. The devotion was perfectly natural. But it required a special effort to cultivate equal devotion between master and servant. The poet's point of view began

gradually to grow upon me.

What then, I asked myself, should be my relation with my wife? Did my faithfulness consist in making my wife the instrument of my lust? So long as I was the slave of lust, my faithfulness was worth noting. To be fair to my wife, I must say that she was never the temptress. It was therefore the easiest thing for me to take the vow of brahmacharya, if only I willed it. It was my weak will or lustful attachment that was the obstacle.

Motive makes a difference

Even after my conscience had been roused in the matter, I failed twice. I failed because the motive that actuated the effort was none the highest. My main object was to escape having more children. Whilst in England I had read something about contraceptives. I have already referred to Dr. Allinson's birth control propaganda in the chapter on vegetarianism. If it had some temporary effect on me, Mr. Hills' opposition to those methods and his advocacy of internal effort as opposed to outward means, in a word, of self-control, had a far greater effect, which in due time came to be abiding.

Seeing, therefore, that I did not desire more children, I began to strive after self-control. There was endless difficulty in the task. We began to sleep in separate beds. I decided to retire to bed only after the day's work had left me completely exhausted. All these efforts did not seem to bear much fruit, but when I look back upon the past I feel that the final resolution was the cumulative effect of those unsuccessful strivings.

Failed efforts culminate in success

The final resolution could only be made as late as 1906. Satyagraha had not then been started. I had not the least notion of its coming. I was practicing in Johannesburg at the time of the Zulu "Rebellion" in Natal, which came soon after the Boer War. I felt that I must offer my services to the Natal Government on that occasion. The offer was accepted, as we shall see in another chapter.

But the work set me furiously thinking in the direction of self-control, and according to my wont I discussed my thoughts with my co-workers. It became my conviction that procreation and the consequent care of children were inconsistent with public service. I had to break up my household at Johannesburg to be able to serve during the "Rebellion."

Within one month of offering my services, I had to give up the house I had so carefully furnished. I took my wife and children to Phoenix, and led the Indian ambulance corps attached to the Natal forces. During the difficult marches that had then to be performed, the idea flashed upon me that if I wanted to devote myself to the service of the community in this manner, I must relinquish the desire for children and wealth and live the life of a vanaprastha–of one retired from household cares.

The vow that opened a door

The "Rebellion" did not occupy me for more than six weeks, but this brief period proved to be a very important epoch in my life. The importance of vows grew upon me

more clearly than ever before. I realized that a vow, far from closing the door to real freedom, opened it. Up to this time I had not met with success because the will had been lacking, because I had had no faith in myself, no faith in the grace of God, and therefore my mind had been tossed on the boisterous sea of doubt. I realized that in refusing to take a vow man was drawn into temptation, and that to be bound by a vow was like a passage from libertinism to a real monogamous marriage.

"I believe in effort, I do not want to bind myself with vows," is the mentality of weakness, and betrays a subtle desire for the thing to be avoided. Or where can be the difficulty in making a final decision? I vow to flee from the serpent which I know will bite me, I do not simply make an effort to flee from him.

I know that mere effort may mean certain death. Mere effort means ignorance of the certain fact that the serpent is bound to kill me. The fact, therefore, that I could rest content with an effort only means that I have not yet clearly realized the necessity of definite action. "But supposing my views are changed in the future, how can I bind myself by a vow?" Such a doubt often deters us. But that doubt also betrays a lack of clear perception that a particular thing must be renounced. That is why Nishkulanand has sung: "Renunciation without aversion is not lasting."

Where therefore the desire is gone, a vow of renunciation is the natural and inevitable fruit.

After full discussion and mature deliberation, I took the vow in 1906. I had not shared my thoughts with my wife until then, but only consulted her at the time of taking the vow. She had no objection. But I had great difficulty in making the final resolve. I had not the necessary strength. How was I to control my passions? The elimination of carnal relationship with one's wife seemed then a strange thing. But I launched forth with faith in the sustaining power of God.

As I look back upon the twenty years of the vow, I am filled with pleasure and wonderment. The more or less successful practice of self-control had been going on since 1901. But the freedom and joy that came to me after taking the vow had never been experienced before 1906.

Before the vow I had been open to being overcome by temptation at any moment. Now the vow was a sure shield against temptation. The great potentiality of brahmacharya daily became more and more patent to me.

Satyagraha and Brahmacharya

The vow was taken when I was in Phoenix. As soon as I was free from ambulance work, I went to Phoenix, whence I had to return to Johannesburg. In [within] about a month of my returning there, the foundation of Satyagraha was laid. As though unknown to me, the brahmacharya vow had been preparing me for it. Satyagraha had not been a preconceived plan. It came on spontaneously, without my having willed it. But I could see that all my previous steps had led up to that goal. I had cut down my heavy household expenses at Johannesburg and gone to Phoenix to take, as it were, the brahmacharya vow.

The knowledge that a perfect observance of brahmacharya means realization

of Brahman, I did not owe to a study of the shastras. It slowly grew upon me with experience. The shastric texts on the subject I read only later in life. Every day of the vow has taken me nearer the knowledge that in brahmacharya lies the protection of the body, the mind and the soul. For brahmacharya was now no process of hard penance, it was a matter of consolation and joy. Every day revealed a fresh beauty in it.

But if it was a matter of ever-increasing joy, let no one believe that it was an easy thing for me. Even when I am past fifty-six years, I realize how hard a thing it is. Every day I realize more and more that it is like walking on the sword's edge, and I see every moment the necessity for eternal vigilance. "Mind is at the root of all sensuality."

Why some aspirants fail

Many aspirants after brahmacharya fail because in the use of their other senses they want to carry on like those who are not brahmacharis. Their effort is, therefore, identical with the effort to experience the bracing cold of winter in the scorching summer months. There should be a clear line between the life of a brahmachari and of one who is not.

The resemblance that there is between the two is only apparent. The distinction ought to be clear as daylight. Both use their eyesight, but whereas the brahmachari uses it to see the glories of God, the other uses it to see the frivolity around him. Both use their ears, but whereas the one hears nothing but praises of God, the other feasts his ears upon ribaldry. Both often keep late hours, but whereas the one devotes them to prayer, the other fritters them away in wild and wasteful mirth. Both feed the inner man, but the one only to keep the temple of God in good repair, while the other gorges himself and makes the sacred vessel a stinking gutter. Thus both live as the poles apart, and the distance between them will grow and not diminish with the passage of time.

What Brahmacharya really entails

"There is no limit to the possibilities of renunciation, even as there is none to those of brahmacharya."

Brahmacharya means control of the senses in thought, word, and deed. Every day I have been realizing more and more the necessity for restraints of the kind I have detailed above. There is no limit to the possibilities of renunciation, even as there is none to those of brahmacharya. Such brahmacharya is impossible of attainment by limited effort. For many it must remain only as an ideal. An aspirant after brahmacharya will always be conscious of his shortcomings, will seek out the passions lingering in the innermost recesses of his heart, and will incessantly strive to get rid of them.

So long as thought is not under complete control of the will, brahmacharya in its fullness is absent. Involuntary thought is an affection of the mind, and curbing of thought therefore means curbing of the mind, which is even more difficult to curb than the wind. Nevertheless the existence of God within makes even control of the mind possible. Let no one think that it is impossible because it is difficult. It is the highest

goal, and it is no wonder that the highest effort should be necessary to attain it.

Faith in God and spiritual discipline

But it was after coming to India that I realized that such brahmacharya was impossible to attain by mere human effort. Until then I had been laboring under the delusion that diet alone would enable me to eradicate all passions, and I had flattered myself with the belief that I had nothing more to do.

But I must not anticipate the chapter of my struggles. Meanwhile let me make it clear that those who desire to observe brahmacharya with a view to realizing God need not despair, provided their faith in God is equal to their confidence in their own effort. "Sense-objects turn away from the abstinent, yet the taste for them remains. But the taste also turns away from him who has seen the Supreme" (Bhagavad Gita 2:59). Therefore His Name and His grace are the last resources of the aspirant after moksha. This truth came to me only after my return to India.

Swami Vivekananda on Brahmacharya

Swami Vivekananda (born Narendra Nath Datta) was one of the foremost disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. After Sri Ramakrishna's passing, because of his dynamic personality, Vivekananda became the center of the monastic disciples and eventually formed the Ramakrishna Order. He spread Sri Ramakrishna's message through the Ramakrishna Mission in India and the Vedanta Societies in the West.

Brahmacharya should be like a burning fire within the veins!

By the establishment of continence energy is gained. The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent, and this is what gave them power. Therefore the Yogi must be continent.

Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power. The Brahmachârin must be sexually pure in thought, word, and deed. Lose regard for the body; get rid of the consciousness of it so far as possible.

Even he, born of a foreign nationality and living in a foreign land, can understand the meaning of our Brahmacharya as the only way to the attainment of spirituality, and belies that it is not even in these days rare in India, whilst the hypocritical heroes of our own household are unable to see anything else than carnal relationship in the matrimonial union! "As a man thinketh in his mind, so he seeth outside."

Every one wants to command, and no one wants to obey; and this is owing to the absence of that wonderful Brahmacharya system of yore.

If the performance of Yajnas is the corner-stone of the work-portion of the Vedas, as surely is Brahmacharya the foundation of the knowledge-portion.

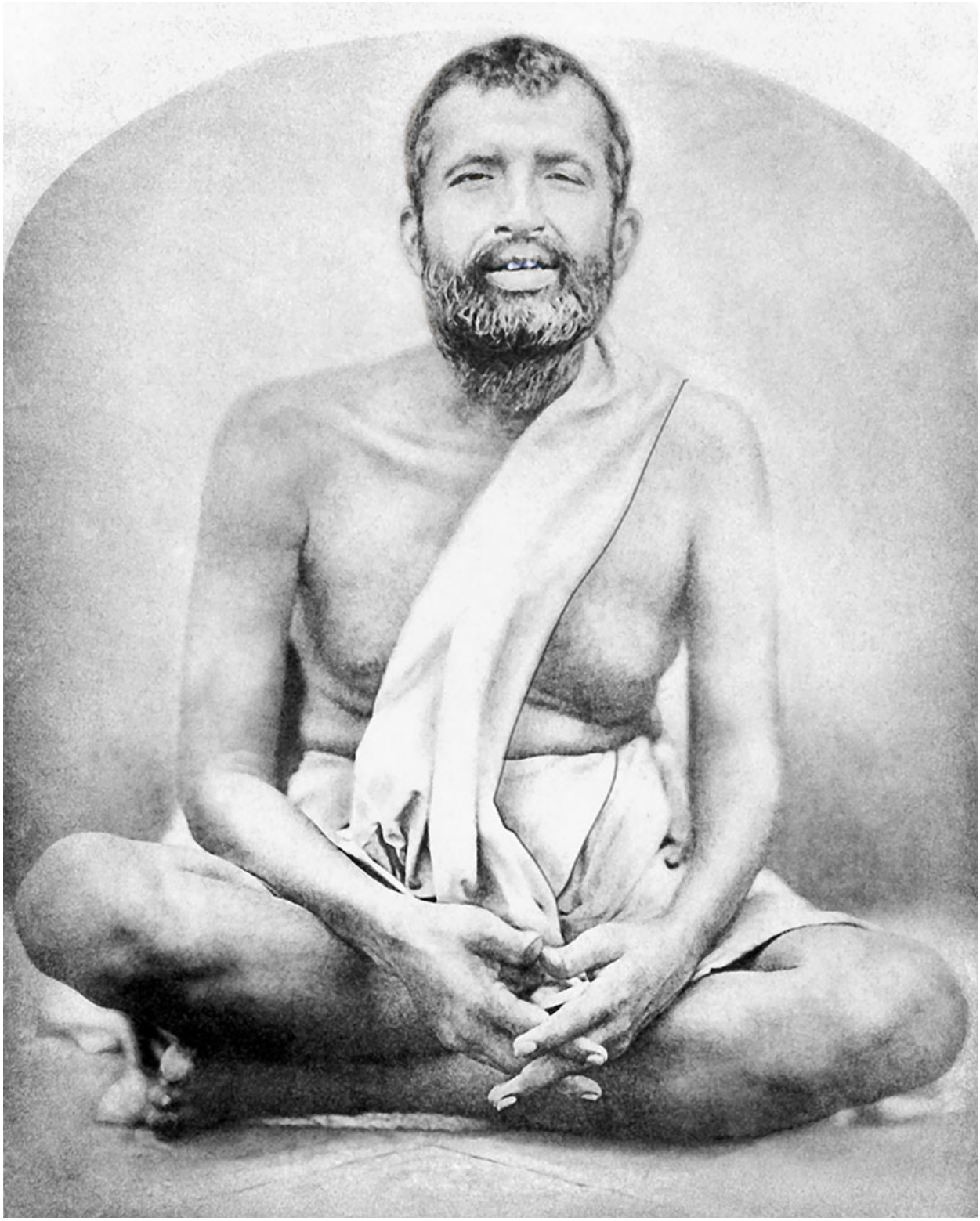
In order to attain to ideal Brahmacharya one has in the beginning to observe strict rules regarding chastity. Not only should one keep oneself strictly aloof from the least association with the opposite sex, but also give up the company of married people even.

Is there a greater strength than that of Brahmacharya–purity, my boy?

Save the spiritual store in your body by observing continence.

The Sanskrit name for a student, Brahmacharin, is synonymous with the Sanskrit word Kamajit. Our goal of life is Moksha; how can that be ever attained without Brahmacharya or absolute continence? Hence it is imposed upon our boys and youth as an indispensable condition during their studentship. The purpose of life in the West is Bhoga, enjoyment; hence much attention to strict Brahmacharya is not so indispensably necessary with them as it is with us.

You have now to make the character of Mahavira [Hanuman] your ideal. See how at the command of Ramachandra he crossed the ocean. He had no care for life or death! He was a perfect master of his senses and wonderfully sagacious. You have now to build your life on this great ideal of personal service. Through that, all other ideals will gradually manifest in life. Obedience to the Guru without questioning, and strict observance of Brahmacharya–this is the secret of success.



Sri Ramakrishna on Brahmacharya

Sri Ramakrishna is one of the most well known religious figures in modern India. His life and teachings have inspired a renewal of spiritual life in India and world-wide.

To be able to realize God, one must practice absolute continence. Sages like Sukadeva are examples of an "urdhvareta" (a person of unbroken and complete continence). Their chastity was absolutely unbroken. A man practicing unbroken brahmacharya for twelve years develops a special power. He grows a new inner nerve called the nerve of memory. Through that nerve he remembers all, he understands all.When a man succeeds in the conservation of his sexual energy, his intellect reflects the image of Brahman. The man who carries this image of Brahman in his heart is able to accomplish everything–he will succeed wonderfully in whatever action he engages himself.

The loss of reproductive elements dissipates a person's strength. But there is no harm in nocturnal emission. That reproductive element is from food. After nocturnal emission, a man retains enough to succeed. But he must not lose it voluntarily. What remains after nocturnal emission is very refined. The Lahas [a family known to Sri Ramakrishna in his childhood] stored pots of molasses with holes in the bottom. After a year it was found that the molasses had turned into crystals, like sugar candy. Whatever liquid there was had come out through the holes.

One cannot hold these spiritual teachings without practicing brahmacharya. Someone said to Chaitanya Deva, '"You give the devotees so much instruction. Why aren't they able to make much progress?" He replied, "They squander it all by breaking brahmacharya. That's why they're not able to hold on to spiritual instruction." If you fill a leaky pail with water, the water trickles out little by little.

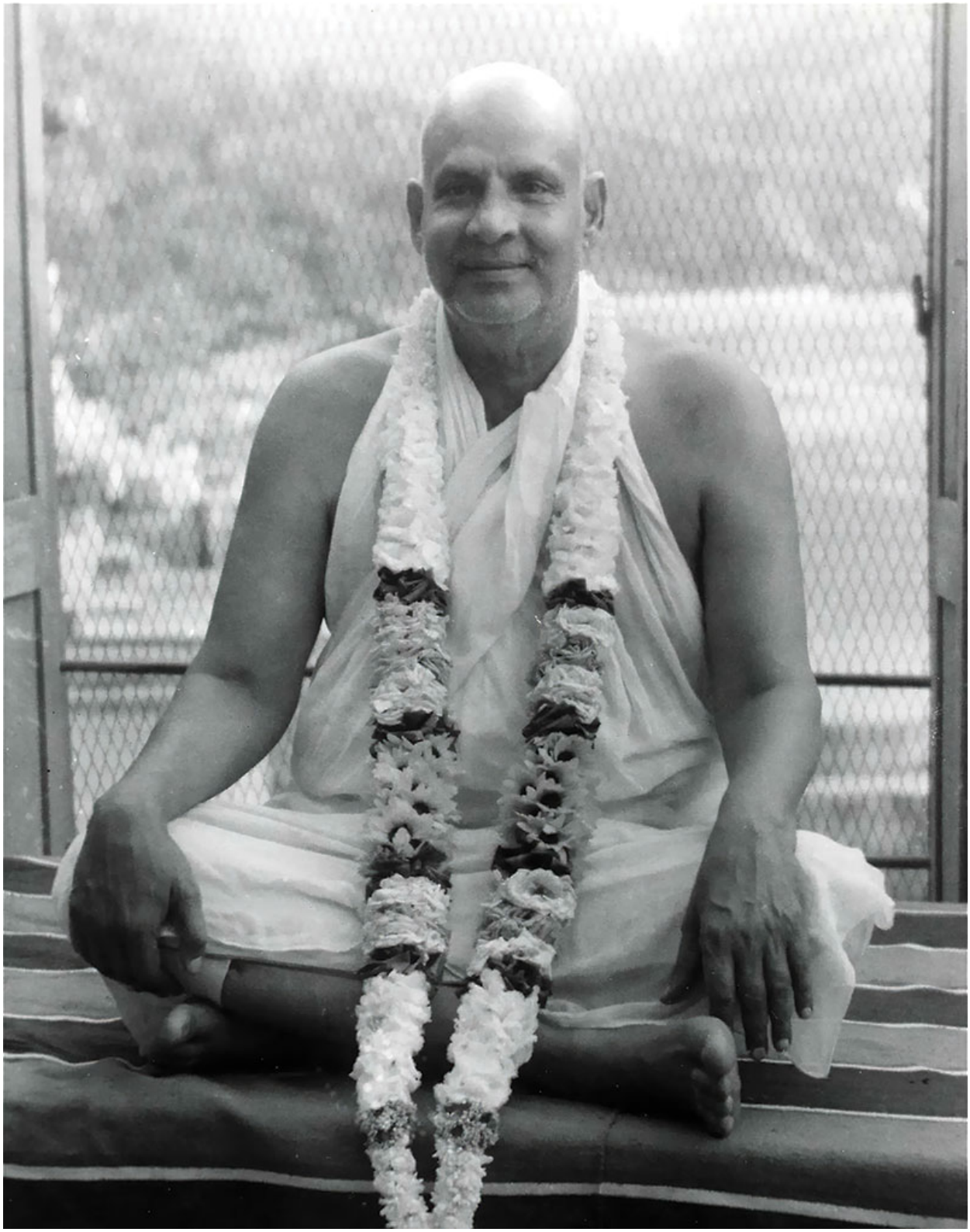
Maya is only "lust and greed." By living in the midst of them for a few days, one loses spiritual awareness but feels that all is well. A scavenger carries a pot of excreta and in course of time, doesn't feel any repulsion for it.

If you want to realize God, you will have to be a brahmachari. Without practicing brahmacharya, one cannot concentrate steadily on God. From brahmacharya comes intellectual conviction and then comes faith in the power of Brahman. Without this faith, one cannot feel that he is living in Brahman. Practice japa and meditation day and night. This is the way one can get rid of attachment to lust and gold.

When a man succeeds in the conservation of his sexual energy, his intellect reflects the image of Brahman, even as a mirror gives a perfect image when its back is painted

with mercury solution. The man who carries this image of Brahman in his heart is able to accomplish everything–he will succeed wonderfully in whatever action he engages himself.

God is not visible to this mind, but to the purified mind! Then this mind disappears. Even one who has the least trace of attachment to sense objects does not succeed. When the mind is purified, you may call it the pure mind, or the pure Atman.



Three Chapters From *Practice of Brahmacharya* by Swami Sivananda

Swami Sivananda was a revered saint of modern times, leaving this world in 1963. Born in south India he served for many years as a medical doctor before renouncing worldly life and establishing Sivanandashram in Rishikesh, north India in 1932.

Chapter Seven: The Meaning of Brahmacharya

Brahmacharya literally means achara or conduct that leads to the realization of Brahman or one's own Self. It means the control of semen, the study of the Vedas and contemplation on God. The technical meaning of brahmacharya is self-restraint, particularly mastery of perfect control over the sexual organ or freedom from lust in thought, word and deed. Strict abstinence is not merely from sexual intercourse, but also from auto-erotic manifestations, from homosexual acts and from all perverse sexual practices. It must further involve a permanent abstention from indulgence in erotic imagination and voluptuous reverie. All sorts of sex anomalies and evil habits of various sorts like masturbation and sodomy must be completely eradicated. They bring about a total breakdown of the nervous system and immense misery.

Brahmacharya is purity in thought, word and deed. It is celibacy and continence. Brahmacharya is the vow of celibacy. The term "celibacy" is from the Latin *caelebs*, meaning unmarried or single, and signifies the state of living unmarried. But brahmacharya is not mere bachelorhood. It includes the control, not only of the sex or reproductive indriya, but also of all other indriyas in thought, word and deed. This is the definition of brahmacharya in a broad sense of the term. The door to Nirvana or perfection is complete brahmacharya. Complete celibacy is the master-key to open the realms of Elysian bliss. The avenue to the abode of supreme peace begins from brahmacharya or purity.

Brahmacharya is absolute freedom from sexual desires and thoughts. A real Brahmachari will not feel any difference in touching a woman, a piece of paper or a block of wood. Brahmacharya is meant for both men and women. Bhishma, Hanuman, Lakshman, Mira Bai, Sulabha and Gargi were all established in brahmacharya.

Mere control of the animal passion will not constitute brahmacharya. This is incomplete brahmacharya. You must control all the organs–the ears that want to hear lustful stories, the lustful eye that wants to see objects that excite passion, the tongue that wants to taste exciting things and the skin that wants to touch exciting objects.

To look lustfully is adultery of the eyes; to hear anything that excites passion is

adultery of the ears; to speak anything that excites passion is adultery of the tongue.

The eight breaks in brahmacharya

You should carefully avoid the eight kinds of enjoyment, namely, sarshan or looking at women with passionate resolve, sparshan or touching them, keli or play, kirtan or praising the qualities of the other sex, guhya-bhashan or talking in private, sankalpa or determination, adhyavasaya or nearing the other sex with the desire for gratification and kriyanivritti or the actual sexual act. These eight kinds of enjoyment are eight kinds of breaks, so to say, in the current of akhanda brahmacharya practice. You must avoid these eight interruptions with great care, sincere exertion and vigilant circumspection. Only he who is free from all these breaks can be called a true brahmachari. A real brahmachari should ruthlessly avoid all these eight breaks.

A brahmachari should avoid looking at a woman with lustful eyes. He should not have the desire to touch her or go near her with evil intention. He should not play, cut jokes or converse with her. He should not praise a woman's qualities within himself or before his friends. He should not speak to a woman in secrecy. He should not think of women at all. He should not have a carnal desire to have sexual enjoyment. A brahmachari should, without fail, avoid sexual intercourse. If he breaks any of the above rules, he violates the vow of brahmacharya.

Though the first seven kinds of maithuna do not cause the actual loss of semen, yet the semen is separated from the blood and it tries to escape when opportunity arises, either in dreams or in other ways. In the first seven kinds, man enjoys mentally.

Aspirants should not indulge in talk about sex. They should not think about ladies. Bring the image of your ishta devata into your mind if the thought of a woman crops up. Repeat the mantra vigorously.

Lustful look, lustful thinking, wet dreams are all failures or breaks in brahmacharya. Be chaste in your look. Give up drishti dosha or lustful look. A lustful look itself is a break in brahmacharya. There is internal discharge. Virya is separated from the system.

See Mother Kali in all women. Cultivate sublime, divine thoughts. Do japa and meditation regularly. You will be established in brahmacharya.

Physical Brahmacharya and mental Brahmacharya

It is very necessary that you should be pure in mind if you wish to be a brahmachari. Mental brahmacharya is more important. You may succeed in physical brahmacharya, but you must succeed in mental brahmacharya also. That state of mind wherein no single sexual thought enters the mind is termed mental brahmacharya. If thoughts are impure, the sex impulse will be very strong. Brahmacharya depends upon regulating the whole course of life.

When you cannot control the lustful thoughts, at least control the physical body. Physical brahmacharya must be strictly practiced at first. Control the body when the sex impulse troubles you. Mental purity or mental brahmacharya will gradually manifest.

Surely it is better to control the karma indriyas at least than to indulge actually in

sensual pleasures. Gradually the thoughts will be purified if you persist in your japa and meditation. Eventually there will be direct control of the mind also.

A sexual act, a sexual contact, revives all bad ideas and gives them a new lease of life. Therefore, the body should be controlled first. Physical brahmacharya must be maintained first. Then only you can achieve mental purity and mental brahmacharya.

You may be able to stop copulation for months and years, but there should not be any sexual craving or attraction for women. Evil thoughts also should not arise when you look at a woman, when you are in the company of women. If you succeed in this direction, then you are established in perfect brahmacharya. You have crossed the danger zone.

Thought is the real action. An evil desire is tantamount to adultery. The desire is more than the act. But, there is a great deal of difference between the actual shooting of a man and thinking to shoot a man, between actual copulation and thinking to have intercourse with a woman. Philosophically speaking, thinking to shoot a man or thinking to have copulation is the real act.

Even if there is a single impure sexual thought in the mind, you can hardly expect to have strict mental brahmacharya. You cannot then be termed as urdhvaretas or one in whom the seminal energy flows upwards towards the brain for being stored up as ojas shakti. There is a tendency for the semen to flow downwards even if there is a single impure thought.

The state of mental brahmacharya must be kept up even amidst temptations and sickness. Then only you are safe. The senses begin to revolt during times of ailment and also when you come in contact with sense objects.

If thoughts of a lustful nature manifest in your mind, it is due to hidden passion. The cunning diplomatic mind seeks silent gratification by looking at a lady and talking to her. Mental maithunam takes place secretly or unconsciously. The force that drags you is hidden passion.

The sex energy has not been sublimated thoroughly. The vital being or pranamaya kosha has not been regenerated and purified perfectly. This is the reason why impure thoughts enter your mind. Do more japa and meditation. Do selfless service in some form for the society. You will soon attain purity.

Learn to cleanse your mind with the water of purity or celibacy, with the soap of divine love. How can you expect to become pure internally by merely washing the body with soap and water? Internal purity is more important than external purity.

Continue the life of brahmacharya. Herein lies your spiritual progress and realization. Do not give a new lease of life to this dire enemy lust by repetition of the sinful act.

Keep the mind fully occupied. Intense musing on the objects of sense does more harm to the inner spiritual life than actual sense-gratification. If the mind is not rendered pure by sadhana, mere mortification of the external senses will not produce the desired effect. Although the external senses are mortified, their internal counterparts, which are still energetic and vigorous, revenge upon the mind and produce intense mental disturbance and wild imagination.

It is the mind that really does all actions. A desire arises in your mind and then you think. Then you proceed to act. The determination of the mind is put into action. First there is sankalpa or thought and then comes action. Therefore, do not allow the sexual thoughts to enter the mind.

No space is empty at any time. This is the law of nature. If one thing is removed from a place, immediately another comes in to take its place. The same law holds good in the case of the inner mental world also. Therefore, it is necessary to entertain sublime divine thoughts to replace evil thoughts. As you think, so you become. This is the immutable psychological law. The vicious mind is gradually divinized by entertaining divine thoughts.

A common complaint

There is always a complaint amongst men that they do not get good success in brahmacharya despite their earnest efforts and sincere practices. They get unnecessarily alarmed and discouraged. It is a mistake. There is a thermometric registration in the spiritual realm also. It is very subtle. The spiritual thermometer registers or indicates the advancement in mental purity even to the minutest degree. You want a vishuddha buddhi or pure intellect to comprehend the degree of purity. Intense sadhana, burning vairagya and burning mumukshutwa or desire for liberation bring on the highest degree of mental purity quickly.

Even if anyone repeats a mantra for just half an hour, the spiritual thermometer registers at once a minute degree of brahmacharya or purity. You are unable to note it on account of your malina buddhi or impure intellect. Do sadhana regularly for one or two years and then compare your state of mind with that of the previous year. You will surely find a vast change. You will experience or feel more calmness, more purity, more inner moral force or strength. There is no doubt of this. Because the old vicious samskaras are very powerful, it takes some time for mental purification. You need not be discouraged. *Nil desperandum*. Never despair. You have to fight against the samskaras of anadi kala or beginningless time. Therefore, a great deal of exertion is needed.

Chapter Eight: The Glory of Brahmacharya

There cannot be any language without vowels. You cannot draw a picture without a canvas or a wall. You cannot write anything without paper. Even so, you cannot have health and spiritual life without brahmacharya. It is the basis for morality. It is the basis for eternal life. It is a spring flower that exhales immortality from its petals. It is the substratum for a life of peace in the Atman. It is the firm support for Brahmanishtha, which is eagerly longed for by sages, aspirants and yogic students. It is the shield for waging war against the internal asuras–lust, anger and greed. It serves as a gateway to the bliss beyond. It opens the door of moksha. It contributes to perennial joy, to the uninterrupted and undecaying bliss. Brahmacharya is the only key to open

the sushumna and awaken Kundalini. It brings glory, fame, virtue and strength of mind. The Lord of Death flees from him. Who can describe the magnanimity, majesty and glory of a true brahmachari!

Brahmacharyena Tapasa Deva Mrityumupagnata. The Vedas declare that by brahmacharya and tapasya the devas have conquered death. There is nothing in the three worlds that cannot be attained by a brahmachari. The Rishis of yore knew fully well the value of brahmacharya and that is the reason why they sang in beautiful verses about the glory of brahmacharya.

Just as the oil comes up in a wick and burns with glowing light, so also, the virya or semen flows up by the practice of yoga sadhana and is converted into tejas or ojas. The brahmachari shines with a Brahmic aura in his face. Brahmacharya is the bright light that shines in the house of the human body. It is the blossomed flower of life around which the bees of strength, patience, knowledge, purity and dhriti wander about humming hither and thither. In other words, he who observes brahmacharya will be endowed with the above qualities. The scriptures declare emphatically:

Ayustejo Balam Veeryam Prajna Sreescha Yashastatha
Punyamcha Sat-Priyatvamcha Vardhate Brahmacharyaya

By the practice of brahmacharya, longevity, glory, strength, vigor, knowledge, wealth, undying fame, virtues and devotion to the truth increase.

Secret of health and longevity

There are indeed many ways to gain health and strength, but brahmacharya is the most important of all. Without brahmacharya, all your exercises are nothing. It is the master-key for opening the realms of health and happiness. It is the corner-stone of the edifice of bliss and unalloyed felicity. It is the only specific that keeps up true manliness.

The preservation of semen is the secret of health and longevity, and of all success in the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual planes. He who has even a little bit of brahmacharya will tide over a crisis of any disease very easily. If it takes a month for an ordinary man for recovery, this man will be completely all right in a week.

The shrutis declare a full life or age of one hundred years for a man. This you can attain only by the establishment of brahmacharya. There are instances of men who have attained longevity and intellectual powers despite their loose, immoral ways. But they would have been still more powerful and brilliant had they possessed a good character and continence as well.

After Dhanvantari had taught all the details about Ayurveda to his disciples, they enquired about the keynote of this medical science. The Master replied, "I tell you that brahmacharya is truly a precious jewel. It is the one most effective medicine–amrita indeed–which destroys diseases, decay and death. For attaining peace, brightness, memory, knowledge, health and Self-realization, one should observe brahmacharya, which is the highest dharma. Brahmacharya is the highest knowledge; brahmacharya is

the greatest strength. Of the nature of brahmacharya is verily this Atman and in brahmacharya it resides. Saluting brahmacharya first, the cases beyond cure, I cure. Aye, brahmacharya can undo all the inauspicious signs."

Practice of brahmacharya gives good health, inner strength, peace of mind and long life. It invigorates the mind and the nerves. It helps to conserve physical and mental energy. It augments memory, will force and brain power. It bestows tremendous strength, vigor and vitality. Strength and fortitude are obtained.

The eye is the window of the mind. If the mind is pure and calm, the eye also is calm and steady. He who is established in brahmacharya will have lustrous eyes, a sweet voice and a beautiful complexion.

Celibacy promotes concentration

By the establishment of continence, vigor is obtained. The yogi gets siddhi or perfection by attaining perfect mental and physical brahmacharya. Brahmacharya helps him in gaining divine knowledge and other siddhis. When there is purity, the rays of the mind are not dissipated. Focussing of the mind becomes easy. Concentration and purity go together. Although a sage speaks a few words only, a deep impression is produced in the minds of the hearers. This is due to his ojas shakti, which is conserved by the preservation of semen and its transmutation.

A true brahmachari in thought, word and deed has wonderful thought-power. He can move the world. If you develop strict celibacy, vichara shakti and dharana shakti will develop. Vichara shakti is the power of enquiry. Dharana shakti is the power of grasping and holding the truth. If a man persistently refuses to yield to his lower nature and remains a strict celibate, the seminal energy is deflected upwards to the brain and is stored up as ojas shakti. Thereby the power of the intellect is intensified to a remarkable degree. The intellect becomes sharp and clear by continence. Continence increases infinitely the power of retentive memory. The strict celibate has keen and acute memory even in old age.

A man who has the power of brahmacharya can turn out immense mental, physical and intellectual work. He has a magnetic aura around his face. He can influence people by speaking just a few words or even by his very presence. He can control anger and move the whole world. Look at Mahatma Gandhi! He had acquired this power by constant and careful practice of ahimsa, satyam and brahmacharya–non-violence, truth and celibacy. He influenced the world through this power alone. Through brahmacharya and brahmacharya alone can you get physical, mental and spiritual advancement in life.

It is worth repeating that a true brahmachari possesses tremendous energy, a clear brain, gigantic will-power, bold understanding, retentive memory and good vichara shakti. Swami Dayananda stopped the carriage of a Maharaja. He broke a sword with his hands. This was due to his power of brahmacharya. Jesus, Shankara, Jnana Deva and Samarth Ramdas were all brahmacharins.

Have you realized, my dear friends, the importance of brahmacharya? Have you recognized, my dear brothers, the true significance and glory of brahmacharya? How

can you expect to be strong and healthy if the energy that is acquired through various means with great difficulty and at great price is wasted daily? It is impossible to be strong and healthy unless males and females, boys and girls, try their level best to keep up brahmacharya or the vow of celibacy.

Even among electrons, there are bachelor electrons and married electrons. Married electrons manifest in pairs. Bachelor electrons exist singly. It is these bachelor electrons only that create magnetic force. The power of brahmacharya is seen in electrons also. Friend, will you learn some lessons from these electrons? Will you practice brahmacharya and develop power and spiritual force? Nature is your best teacher and spiritual guide.

Through brahmacharya get over the miseries of mundane life and attain health, strength, peace of mind, endurance, bravery, material progress, psychic advancement and immortality. One who has a perfect control over the sexual energy attains powers unobtainable by any other means. Therefore, dissipate not your energy in sensual pleasures. Conserve your energy. Do noble deeds and practice meditation. You will soon become a superman. You will commune with God and attain Divinity.

Chapter Nine:
Importance of Celibacy in Spiritual Life

Brahmacharya is a divine word. It is the sum and substance of yoga. Through avidya, this is forgotten. The importance of brahmacharya was emphasized by our great Rishis. It is the supreme yoga, which Lord Krishna emphasizes repeatedly in the Bhagavad Gita. In Chapter Six, sloka fourteen, it is very clearly stated that the vow of brahmacharya is necessary for meditation: *Brahmacharivrate Sthitah*. In Chapter Seventeen, sloka fourteen, He says that brahmacharya is one of the requisites for the austerity of the body. Now, we have another statement made in Chapter Eight, sloka eleven, that yogis practice brahmacharya in order to attain the goal spoken of by the knowers of the Vedas. A similar statement is also found in the Kathopanishad.

In the Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi also, yama is the first step. Yama is the practice of ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya and aparigraha–non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy and non-receiving of gifts. Among these brahmacharya is the most important.

In Jnana Yoga too, dama or self-control is the foundation for the student.

In the Mahabharata you will find in the Shanti Parva: “Many are the branches of dharma, but dama is the basis of them all.”

Brahmacharya is the vital subject for those who want success in material or spiritual life. Without it, a man is absolutely unfit for worldly activities as well as for spiritual practices.

Down through the ages, the highest stress has been laid on brahmacharya or sexual abstinence in every religion. Throughout folklore runs the idea that second-sight and the vision of the supernatural are especially, if not solely, the privilege of the celibates.

Brahmacharya–the foundation of spiritual life

Brahmacharya is a *sine qua non* of spiritual life. It is a great desideratum. It is of vital importance. Without perfect brahmacharya, you cannot have substantial spiritual progress.

Abstinence or continence is the corner-stone on which the pedestal of moksha stands. If the corner-stone is not very strong, the superstructure will fall down when there is heavy rain. Even so, if you are not established in brahmacharya, if your mind is agitated by evil thoughts, you will fall down. You cannot reach the summit of the ladder of yoga or the highest nirvikalpa samadhi.

There is no hope for you to have Self-realization or Knowledge of the Self if you are not well established in brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the master-key to open the realms of eternal bliss. Brahmacharya is the very foundation of yoga. Just as a house that is built on a rotten foundation will surely fall down, so also, you will fall down from your meditation if you have laid no proper foundation, namely, the attainment of perfect brahmacharya. You may meditate for, a period of twelve years, and yet, you will have no success in Samadhi if you have not destroyed the subtle lust or the craving-seed that lingers in the innermost recesses of your heart.

Brahmacharya is the basis for the attainment of kaya siddhi–physical perfection. Complete celibacy must be observed. This is of paramount importance. By the practice of yoga the semen becomes transmuted into ojas shakti. The yogi will have a perfect body. There will be charm and grace in his movements. He can live as long as he likes. This is also known as Iccha Mrityu or death at will.

The practice of brahmacharya is the most important qualification for the spiritual aspirant, no matter what his chosen path may be–Karma Yoga, Upasana, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga or Vedanta. The discipline of complete abstinence is demanded from all aspirants. Only a true brahmachari can cultivate bhakti. Only a true brahmachari can practice yoga. Only a true brahmachari can acquire jnana. Without brahmacharya, no spiritual progress is possible.

Lust deals a deadly blow to the spiritual calibre of man. It is not possible for you to enter the spiritual path that leads to union with God unless and until you control lust and become established in brahmacharya. As long as lust smells sweet in your nostrils, you cannot entertain sublime, divine thoughts in your mind. That man in whom the sex idea is deep-rooted can never dream of understanding Vedanta and realizing Brahman even within one billion births. Truth cannot dwell where passion lives.

Sexual indulgence is a great obstacle in the spiritual path. It bars spiritual practices definitely. The sexual urge must be controlled by entertaining sublime thoughts and regular meditation. There must be complete sublimation of the sexual energy. Then only is the aspirant absolutely safe. The total annihilation of the sexual desire is the ultimate spiritual ideal.

Sex attraction, sexual thoughts and sexual urge are the three great obstacles in the path of God-realization. Even if the sexual urge vanishes, the sex attraction remains for a long time and troubles the aspirants. Sex attraction is very, very powerful. Sex

attraction binds one to this world. Each cell in the body of a male or a female is surcharged with the sex element. The mind and the senses are filled with sex juice. Man cannot remain without looking at a woman, without talking to her. He derives pleasure in the company of a woman. Woman also cannot remain without looking at a man, without talking to him. She derives pleasure in the company of a man. That is the reason why he or she finds it extremely difficult to annihilate the sex attraction. Sex attraction cannot be destroyed without the grace of the Lord. No human effort can eradicate *in toto* this mighty force of sex attraction.

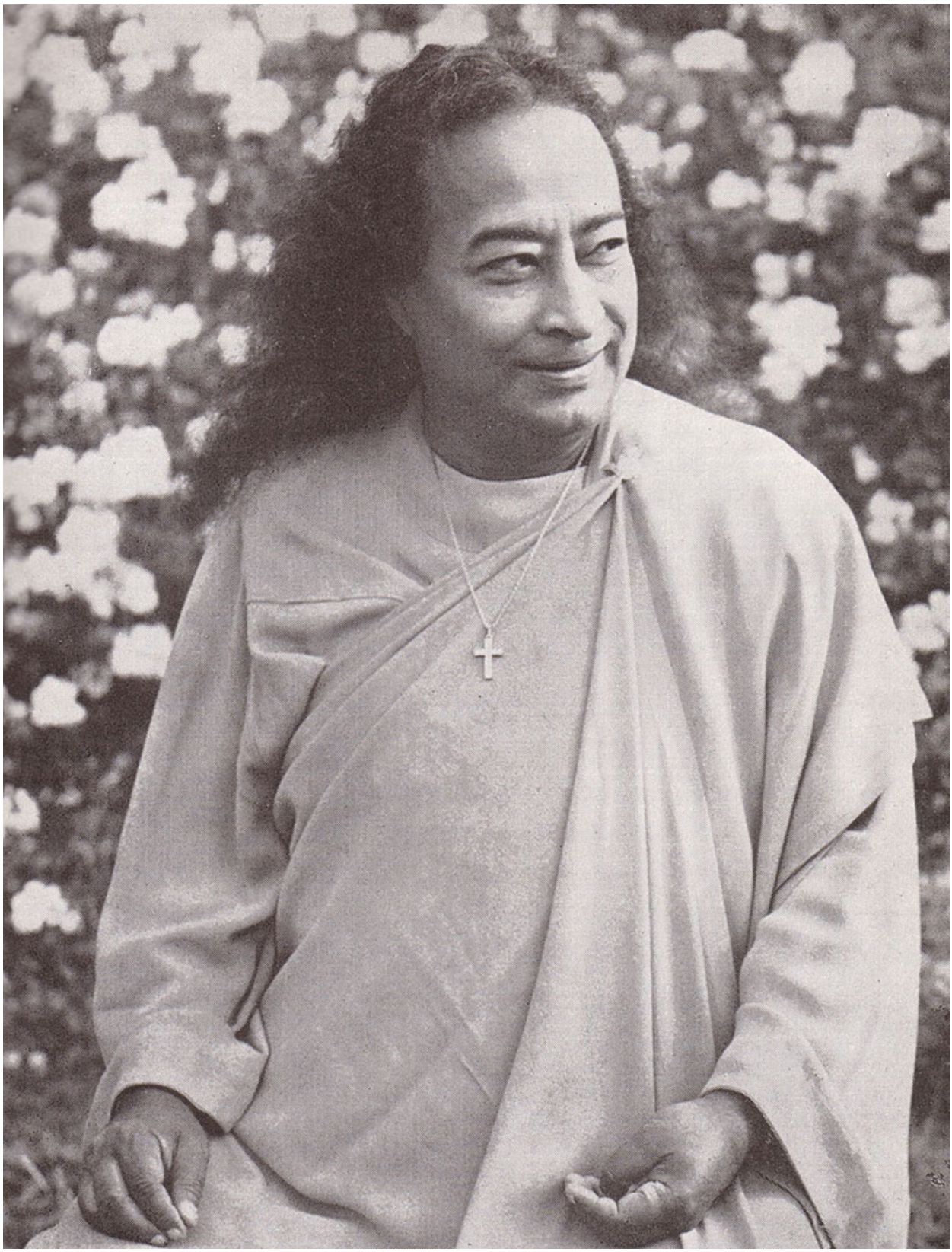
The organ of sight does great mischief. Destroy the lustful look, the adultery of the eye. Try to see God in all faces. Again and again generate the currents of dispassion, discrimination and enquiry. Eventually you will be established in Brahman or the Eternal. Again and again generate sublime divine thoughts and increase your japa and meditation. The sexual thought will be annihilated.

Of what avail is knowledge of the arts and sciences, of what avail is reputation or titles, of what avail is repetition of the Lord's Name or meditation or enquiry of "Who am I?," if you become a slave of lust? Control this strong urge first by the rigorous tapasya of sense-control. Before you take to advanced meditation, first become at least a strict physical celibate. Then endeavor to have perfection in mental chastity.

Amongst you all, there may be a hidden Shakespeare or a Kalidasa, a hidden Wordsworth or a Valmiki, a potential saint, a St. Xavier, an akhanda brahmachari like Bhishma Pitamaha, a Hanuman or a Lakshman, a Viswamitra or a Vashishtha, a great scientist like Dr. J.C. Bose or Raman, a yogi like Jnana Deva or Gorakhnath, a philosopher like Shankara or Ramanuja, a Bhakta like Tulsidas, Ramdas or Eknath.

Awaken, then, your hidden faculties, potential energies of all description, through brahmacharya and attain God-consciousness quickly and get over the miseries of this mundane life with its concomitant evils of birth, death and sorrow.

Blessed is the brahmachari who has taken the vow of celibacy till the end of life. Twice blessed is that brahmachari who is sincerely struggling to destroy lust and attain perfect purity. Thrice blessed is that brahmachari who has completely rooted out lust and has attained Self-realization. Glory be to such exalted brahmacharins! They are veritable gods on earth. May their blessings be upon you all.



Paramhansa Yogananda on Brahmacharya

Paramhansa Yogananda was the most influential yogi of the 20th century, making knowledge of the concept of yoga virtually universal in America during and beyond his lifetime. He wrote the famous Autobiography of a Yogi *which has become a a spiritual classic.*

In the higher worlds fact is also allegory–that is the nature of those worlds. The story of Adam and Eve in Paradise (not in this material world) has a historical basis, but a most important meaning for those who aspire to higher life and consciousness. Therefore the following passage from Chapter Sixteen of Paramhansa Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogi *is of great value to us. (Editor's Note.)*

"The Adam and Eve story is incomprehensible to me!" I observed with considerable heat one day in my early struggles with the allegory. "Why did God punish not only the guilty pair, but also the innocent unborn generations?"

Master was more amused by my vehemence than my ignorance. "Genesis is deeply symbolic, and cannot be grasped by a literal interpretation," he explained. "Its 'tree of life' is the human body. The spinal cord is like an upturned tree, with man's hair as its roots, and afferent and efferent nerves as branches. The tree of the nervous system bears many enjoyable fruits, or sensations of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. In these, man may rightfully indulge; but he was forbidden the experience of sex, the 'apple' at the center of the bodily garden. ["We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Genesis 3:2-3]

"The 'serpent' represents the coiled-up spinal energy which stimulates the sex nerves. 'Adam' is reason, and 'Eve' is feeling. When the emotion or Eve-consciousness in any human being is overpowered by the sex impulse, his reason or Adam also succumbs. ["The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. The woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Genesis 3:12-13]

"God created the human species by materializing the bodies of man and woman through the force of His will; He endowed the new species with the power to create children in a similar 'immaculate' or divine manner. ["So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." Genesis 1:27-28.] Because His manifestation in the individualized soul had hitherto been limited to animals, instinct-bound and lacking the potentialities of full reason, God made the first human bodies, symbolically called Adam and Eve. To these, for advantageous upward evolution, He transferred the souls or divine essence of two animals. ["And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Genesis 2:7.] In Adam or man, reason predominated; in Eve or woman, feeling was ascendant. Thus was expressed the duality or polarity which underlies the phenomenal worlds. Reason and feeling remain in a heaven of cooperative joy so long as the human mind is not tricked by the serpentine energy of animal propensities.

"The human body was therefore not solely a result of evolution from beasts, but was produced by an act of special creation by God. The animal forms were too crude to express full divinity; the human being was uniquely given a tremendous mental capacity–the 'thousand-petaled lotus' of the brain–as well as acutely awakened occult centers in the spine.

"God, or the Divine Consciousness present within the first created pair, counseled them to enjoy all human sensibilities, but not to put their concentration on touch sensations. ["Now the serpent (sex force) was more subtil than any beast of the field" (any other sense of the body).-Genesis 3:1.] These were banned in order to avoid the development of the sex organs, which would enmesh humanity in the inferior animal method of propagation. The warning not to revive subconsciously-present bestial memories was not heeded. Resuming the way of brute procreation, Adam and Eve fell from the state of heavenly joy natural to the original perfect man.

"Knowledge of 'good and evil' refers to the cosmic dualistic compulsion. Falling under the sway of *maya* through misuse of his feeling and reason, or Eve–and Adam–consciousness, man relinquishes his right to enter the heavenly garden of divine self-sufficiency. The personal responsibility of every human being is to restore his 'parents' or dual nature to a unified harmony or Eden."

Scriptures and Saints on Brahmacharya

Holy Purity, the queen of virtues, the angelic virtue, is a jewel so precious that those who possess it become like the angels of God in heaven, even though clothed in mortal flesh. (St. John Bosco)

Chastity is the lily of virtues, and makes men almost equal to angels. Everything is beautiful in accordance with its purity. Now the purity of man is chastity, which is called honesty, and the observance of it, honor and also integrity; and its contrary is called corruption; in short, it has this peculiar excellence above the other virtues, that it preserves both soul and body fair and unspotted. (Saint Francis de Sales)

Only those who (observe) brahmacharya will attain to Brahman. For them there is freedom to act as they wish in all the worlds. Now, what people call yajna (sacrifice), that is really brahmacharya. What people call worship (ishta), that is really brahmacharya. What people call Vedic sacrifice, that is really brahmacharya. For only through brahmacharya does one understand the Atman (the Self). (Chandogya Upanishad 8.4.3, 8.5.1-2)

The highest form of tapas (austerity) is the abstinence from sexuality and not in the performance of body-torturing rites. Heroism lies in the conquest of one's sensual, lustful nature and not in mere combativeness. (Srimad Bhagavatam 1.11.18.43)

With mind quieted, banishing fear, firm in the brahmachari's vow, controlling the mind, with thoughts fixed on me, steadfast, he should sit, devoted to me. Always disciplining himself thus, the yogi whose mind is subdued goes to the supreme peace of nirvana, and attains to union with me. (Bhagavad Gita 6:14-15)

That which the knowers of the Veda call the Eternal (Imperishable), which the ascetics free from passion enter, desiring which they live the life of brahmacharya, that path I shall explain unto you briefly. (8:11)

In the higher forms of Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, great stress has been laid on the observance of perfect brahmacharya in thought, word and deed. You find it in the Sermon on the Mount, in the Vinaya Pitaka of Buddhism and in the Upanishads, in the Gita and in the Bhagavatam. A socially accepted form of moral life alone is not enough for a spiritual aspirant. He must attain perfection in moral virtues, especially brahmacharya. (Swami Yatiswarananda)

Know that in this world there is nothing that cannot be attained by one who remains from birth to death a perfect brahmachari. In one person, knowledge of the

four Vedas, and in another, perfect brahmacharya–of these, the latter is superior to the former who is wanting in brahmacharya. (The Mahabharata)

I consider my greatest accomplishment to be lifelong celibacy. (Isaac Newton)

Celibacy is a great help, inasmuch as it enables one to lead a life of full surrender to God. (Mahatma Gandhi)

Continence and Its Creative Power

Swami Jagadishwarananda

The following is an extraction from the small book that was printed in 1941. The author was a disciple of Mahapurusha Swami Sivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Toward the end of his life he became the president of the worldwide Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

All great mystics and the majority of great idealists, the giants among the Creators of the Spirit, have clearly and instinctively realized what formidable power of concentrated soul, of accumulated creative energy, is generated by control of the organic and psychic expenditure of sexuality.

Mahatma Gandhi states in "Self-Control versus Self-Indulgence" that it is brahmacharya which has endowed him with mental strength and physical vigor. Gandhiji further testifies that politics is the evanescent and least part of his life, whereas brahmacharya is the real and permanent part of his life.

The physical advantage of brahmacharya

Doctor Malchow considers that the preservation of the internal secretion of sex-glands within the body has the greatest physiological value. He holds that the fluids emitted during an orgasm are not waste material, and that their retention would in themselves not be altogether a disadvantage. He is of the opinion that such preservation contributes largely towards the acquisition of a strong constitution, both physical and mental, through bio-chemical economy, as the emissions dissociate a large percentage of iron, phosphorus, and calcium from the blood. Malchow in his *The Sexual Life* (p. 34) remarks that it is a deep and discriminating knowledge of psychology of man which requires the elimination of sexuality in order to ensure greater enthusiasm, deeper devotion, and mental concentration for a spiritual cause. In *Natural Therapeutics* (Vol. II. p. 318) it is said that the sex-fluid is the carrier of the life-force. During abstinence the sex-fluid with its creative energy is absorbed through the inguinal glands into the organism and increases physical, moral and spiritual capacity and energy. It is upheld by *Encyclopaedia of Physical Culture* (Vol. V, p. 2450) that one part of semen is equal to many parts of pure blood, and that when absorbed again into the system this fluid is transformed into nerve energy. According to Hindu scriptures the natural age for a man is one hundred years. Milton Severen of the West remarks in this connection: "That one may attain to the age of one hundred years or more is no visionary statement. According to psychological and natural laws, the duration of human lives should be at least five times the period necessary to reach full growth. This is a prevailing law which is exemplified in the brute creation. The horse grows about four years and lives to about 12 to 14; the camel grows on for eight years and lives to about 40. Man grows from 20 to 25; if accidents could be excluded, his normal

duration of life should not be less than one hundred years." Continence is thus the true secret of longevity.

There are other western doctors who hold similar views like that of Malchow and advocate that celibacy does prolong life. Dr. Nichols writes; "It is a medical, a physiological fact that the best blood in the body goes to form the elements of reproduction in both sexes. In a pure and orderly life this matter is absorbed and goes back into circulation ready to form the finest brain, nerve, and muscular tissue. This matter carried back and diffused through his system makes him manly, strong, brave, and heroic. If wasted, it leaves him effeminate, weak and irresolute, intellectually and physically debilitated and a prey to sexual irritation, irregular function, morbid sensation, disordered muscular movement, a wretched nervous system, epilepsy, insanity and death." Dr. Nichols further adds that the suspension of the use of the generative organ is attended with a notable increase of mental and bodily vigor and spiritual life. Medical authorities assert that energy wasted in one sexual act shatters the nervous system so much that it is tantamount to the expenditure of mental energy in mental work of 24 hours or to physical energy in physical work of 7 days.

Testimonies of medical authorities

That continence is not detrimental and impossible but absolutely necessary and perfectly possible is evident from the following medical testimonies of the eminent authorities on this subject:

"The sexual instinct," says Oesterlen, Professor at Tubingen University, "is not so blindly all-powerful that it cannot be controlled, and even subjugated entirely, by moral strength and reason. The young man, like the young woman, should learn to control himself until the proper time. He must know that robust health and ever-renewed vigor will be the reward of this voluntary sacrifice. One cannot repeat too often that abstinence and the most absolute purity are perfectly compatible with the laws of physiology and morality, and that sexual indulgence is no more justified by physiology and psychology than by morality and religion."

"The example of the best and noblest among men," says Sir Lionel Beale, Professor at the Royal College in London, "has at all times proved that the most imperious of instincts can be effectively resisted by a strong and serious will, and by sufficient care as to manner of life and occupation. Sexual abstinence has never yet hurt any man when it has been observed, not only through exterior restrictive causes, but as a voluntary rule of conduct. Virginity, in fine, is not too hard to observe, provided that it is the physical expression of a certain state of mind. Chastity implies, not only continence, but also purity of sentiments, the energy which is the result of deep convictions."

"All causes of sexual disturbance," says the Swiss psychologist Forel, "increase the intensity of desire. By avoiding these provocations it becomes less sensitive, and the desire gradually diminishes. The idea is current among young people that continence is something abnormal and impossible and yet the many who observe it prove that chastity can be practiced without prejudice to the health."

"I know," says Ribbing, "a number of men of 25, 30 and older than that, who have observed perfect continence, or who when they married had done so up to that time. Such cases are not rare; only they don't advertise themselves."

"Before marriage, absolute continence can and ought to be observed by young men," says Dr. Acton. "Chastity no more injures the body than the soul," declares Sir James Paget, physician to the English court, "and discipline is better than any other line of conduct."

"It is a singularly false notion," writes Dr. E. Perier, "and one which must be fought against, since it besets not only the children's mind, but that of the fathers as well–the notion of imaginary dangers in absolute continence. Virginity is a physical, moral and intellectual safeguard to young men."

"Continence," says Sir Andrew Clarke, "does no harm, it does not hinder development, it increases energy and enlivens perception. Incontinence weakens self-control, creates habits of slackness, dulls and degrades the whole being, and lays it open to diseases which can be transmitted to several generations. To say that incontinence is necessary to the health of young men is not only an error but a cruelty if not a crime. It is at once false and hurtful."

"The evils of incontinence are well-known and undisputed," writes Dr. Surbled. "Those produced by continence are imaginary; what proves this is the fact of the many learned and voluminous works devoted to the explanation of the former while the latter still await their historian. As to these latter there are but vague assertions, which hide themselves, for very shame, in mere talk, but which will not endure the daylight."

Dr. Dubois, the famous professor of Neuropathology at Berne, affirms that "there are more victims of neurasthenia among those who give free rein to their sensuality than among those who know how to escape from the yoke of mere animalism," and his witness is fully confirmed by that of Dr. Fere, physician at the Bicertre Hospital, who testifies that those who are capable of psychic chastity can maintain their continence without any fear for their health, which does not depend on the satisfaction of the sexual instinct.

"There has been unfitting and light talk," writes Professor Alfred Fourner, "about the dangers of continence for the young men. I can assure you that if these dangers exist I know nothing about them, and that as a physician I am still without proof of their existence, though I have had every opportunity in the way of subjects under my professional observation. Sexual precocity is merely artificial and is most often the result of ill-directed up-bringing."

"I have never seen" writes Dr. Montegazza, "a disease produced by continence, but who is not aware of those frightful diseases of which moral indiscipline is the source. The body finds itself converted into an indescribable state of rottenness. Nor can we forget the worst defilement of imagination, heart and understanding. All men, and young men in particular, can experience the immediate benefit of chastity. The memory is quiet and tenacious, the brain lively and fertile, the will energetic, the whole character gains a strength of which libertines have no conception; no prism shows us our surroundings under such heavenly colors as that of chastity, which lights up with

its rays the least objects in the universe, and transports us into the purest joys of an abiding happiness that knows neither shadow nor decline." And the doctor adds: "The joy, the cordial merriment, the sunny confidence of vigorous young men who have remained chaste, are an eloquent contrast to the restless obsessions and feverish excitement of their companions who are slaves to the demands of sensuality."

In the second General Congress of the International Conference of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis held at Brussels in 1902, a resolution was unanimously passed by the hundred and two most competent authorities on the subject throughout the world, assembled in the Congress, that young men must above all be taught that chastity and continence are not only not harmful, but also that these virtues are among those to be most earnestly recommended from the purely medical and hygienic stand-point.

A few years ago the professors of the Medical Faculty of Christiania University issued a unanimous declaration that "the assertion that a chaste life will be prejudicial to the health rests, according to our unanimous experience, on no foundation. We have no knowledge of any harm resulting from a pure and moral life."

M. Ruyssen is of the opinion that it is a physiological truth that the sexual appetite does not need, like the requirements of aliment and exercise, a minimum of necessary satisfaction. "It is a fact," he adds "that man or woman can lead a chaste life without experiencing, except in the case of a few abnormal subjects, serious disturbance or even painful inconvenience. It has been said–and cannot be too often repeated, since such an elementary truth cannot be so widely disregarded–that no disease ever comes through continence to normal subjects, who form the immense majority, while many diseases, very well known and very serious, are the results of incontinence. Nature has provided in the most simple and infallible way for the excess of nutrition which is represented by the seminal fluid and the menstrual flux. While continence is a virtue full of repose, incontinence opens the door to an unknown guest who may become formidable. The revelation of passion which is troublesome at any age may become in youth the signal of a radical perversion, we would say, of an irreparable disturbance of the balance of the will and the senses."

Sexual appetite is neither a true instinct nor a real need. "Every one knows," Dr. Viry observes, "what it would cost him not to satisfy the need of nourishment or to suppress respiration but no one quotes any pathological consequences, either acute or chronic, as having followed either temporary or absolute continence. In normal life we see the example of chaste men who are neither less virile in character nor less energetic in will, nor less robust than other, nor less fitted to become fathers, if they marry. A need which can be the subject of such variations, an instinct which accommodates itself so well to lack of satisfaction is neither a need nor an instinct. Sexual relationship is far from answering to any physiological need of the growing boy; quite the contrary, it is perfect chastity which is sternly required by the exigencies of his normal growth and development and those who violate it cause irreparable injury to their health."

The great British physiologist, John G. M. Kendrick, Professor of Physiology at Glasgow University, says: "The illicit satisfaction of nascent passion is not only a moral fault but a terrible injury to the body. The new need becomes a tyrant if yielded to; a

guilty complacency will listen to it and make it more imperious; every fresh act will forge a new link in the chain of habit. Many have no longer strength to break it and helplessly end in physical and intellectual ruin, slaves of a habit contacted often through ignorance rather than perversity. The safeguard consists in cultivating within oneself purity of thought and discipline of one's whole being."

In the same strain Dr. Franke Escande observes: "As to sexual desire we assert the intelligence and the will have absolute control over it. It is necessary to employ the term sexual desire, not need, for there is no question of a function the non-accomplishment of which is incompatible with existence. Really it is not a need at all; but many men are persuaded that it is. The interpretation they give to the desire makes them look on cohabitation as absolutely necessary. Now we cannot look on the sexual act as resulting from senile and passive obedience to natural laws. We are, on the contrary, concerned with a voluntary act, following a determination or acquiescence, often premeditated and prepared for."

What history tells us

It will be interesting to analyze methodically the practice of accepted or voluntary celibacy in France and England previous to the nineteenth century. For noble families there were institutions that involved celibacy; the order of Malta and various Benifices for the boys; the Noble Chapter for the girls. "Nunra was said to have instituted the order of Vestal Virgins. They remained unmarried for thirty years. Burial alive was the penalty for breaking the vow of chastity. The vestal virgins were distinguished by extraordinary influence and personal dignity. They were treated with marks of respect usually accorded to royalty; thus on the streets they were preceded by a lictor, and the highest magistrates made way for them. They enjoyed sometimes the exceptional privilege of riding in a carriage; at public games a place of honor was assigned to them and after death they, like the Imperators, were allowed to be buried within the city, because they were above the laws. They enjoyed the royal privilege of mercy; for if they met a criminal on the way to execution, his life was spared" (From *Practice of Brahmacharya* by Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. p. 93). The Peruvian priests known as "virgins of the sun" were punished with living burial if detected in immoral conduct. The Buddhist order enforced very stringent discipline of continence on the monks. For violation of the rules they were disrobed and expelled from the order. In the Tibetan order of Buddhist monks, the delinquent is denounced and if caught red-handed, is subject to corporeal chastisement in public and expulsion from the order.

Procreation hastens death

William Loftus Hare, writing in "The Open Court" (Chicago) in March, 1926 on "Generation and Regeneration," gave convincing arguments regarding the biological necessity of continence. He pointed out that the undifferentiated germ-cells of the body are performing two functions simultaneously; namely, the internal reproduction or regeneration for the building up of the body and external reproduction or generation for the continuation of the species. He proves with biological facts and figures that the

regenerative process is fundamental for the individual and therefore necessary and primary, whereas the generative process is due to the superfluity of cells and is therefore secondary. Both are closely dependent on nourishment and if this be low there is deficiency of both the processes. Mr. W. L. Hare then adds, "The law of life at this level is to feed the germ-cells firstly for regeneration and secondly for generation. In case of deficiency which is a very common feature in modern men and women, regeneration must take the first place and generation be suspended. Thus we may learn the origin of the suspension of reproduction and follow it to its later phases of human continence and asceticism generally. Inner reproduction can never be suspended even at the cost of disease and death. Every moment of growth from conception onwards exhibits this increasing power of regeneration. If regeneration ceases or is imperfectly performed, disease or death will supervene. The nemesis of reproduction is death and the sexual act is essentially katabolic in the male and in the parturition of the offspring it is katabolic for the female." Hence the insightful writer contends that virility and vitality and immunity from disease are the normal lot of quite continent persons. Patrick Geddes writes in his *The Evolution of Sex* that the association of reproduction and death is indeed patent enough but the connection in popular language is usually misstated. The true statement, as far as history furnishes an answer, is not that animals reproduce because they have to die but that they die because they have to reproduce. In support of this view Goethe, the great German thinker, says that it is not death that makes reproduction necessary but reproduction has death as its inevitable consequence. From the physiological point of view, when physical creation is stopped, the way to intellectual creation is open and when intellectual creation is suspended, spiritual creation or religious experience is possible.

Religion and continence

All the great religions have always set before believers an ideal of asceticism and the conquest of lower nature and it is just so far as they have taught men to rise above lower nature to self-liberation that they have arrested their minds, influenced their wills and filled their hearts with generous enthusiasm.

So long as Roman paganism was a living religion, it surrounded with a mystical reverence the Vestals whose immaculate chastity pleased the gods. The Catholic Church from her first days has asserted the pre-eminence of religious celibacy, and has taught her votaries to esteem the social value of virginity and perpetual celibacy.

That sexual abstinence is absolutely necessary for religious progress is the verdict of the spiritual giants of humanity, because the nervous system and brain which are impaired by incontinence are too weak to engage in the spiritual practice which produces transformation of the physical, mental and spiritual condition of the ascetic. The perceptions of higher phases of spiritual verities require the activity of very sensitive and subtle nerves. Without continence those nerves degenerate, die and become inoperative. Higher spiritual experiences are impossible for people who are incontinent. That is why continence, in some form or other, has been looked upon as the basis of spiritual life by all spiritual systems of the world without exception.

Physiology and psychology of continence

According to medical science healthy sexual glands ensure physical vigor and long life. When these glands function properly, they give out an internal secretion which stimulates and strengthens the organic tissues, specially the brain cells and spinal cord. Celibate life demonstrates that continence can keep these glands most healthy and active. Mahatma Gandhi rightly says: '"Sexual act for the purpose of carnal satisfaction is reversion to animality and it should be therefore man's endeavor to rise above it. Man is superior to the brute inasmuch as he is capable of self-restraint of which the brute is incapable. Self-indulgence cannot be the law of life as some hold, except to the idiots and imbeciles. Passions are never extinguished by satiation." Mr. C. E. M. Joad rightly says: ''If you make sense-pleasure the ideal of your life, a time will come when nothing will any more please you." In the Adi Parva (73rd chapter) of the Mahabharata it is stated: "Lust is never gratified by enjoyment. Enjoyment increases the passion as ghee (clarified butter) poured upon fire increases the latter by leaps and bounds." Give up therefore desires which are quenched not by enjoyment but by elimination. "Most cases of irritability and hysteria and even insanity," observes Gandhiji, "which are wrongly ascribed to attempts at continence will, in truth, be found traceable to the incontinence of the other senses."

There are, at least, a handful of people who are evidently fit for total abstinence and it is they who experience its creative power. The real point at issue in the case of continence is, in the language of psycho-analysis, sublimation. Thousands of other ways of successfully tackling the problem of sublimation have been invented by the religionists of all countries. All, except a queer and quixotic minority, admit that the more we practice continence the better is our physical and mental health. The more we yield to sexual impulses, the more we ruin our life and health. Rishi Patanjali says: "Brahmacharya (continence) literally means Virya-dharana or conservation of sexual energy and retention of semen." Sri Yajnavalkya says: "Brahmacharya or continence means abstaining from sexual enjoyment in thought, word and deed in all conditions, in all places, in all times." In the opinion of Dr. Dio Louis, all eminent physiologists agree that the most precious atoms of the blood enter into the composition of semen. He further adds that the conservation of this element is essential to strength of body, vigor of mind and keenness of intellect.

Dr. E. P. Miller writes, "All waste of spermatic secretions whether voluntary or involuntary is a direct waste of life-force. It is almost universally conceded that the choicest element of the blood enters into the composition of the spermatic secretion." It follows from this that a chaste life is essential to man's well-being. According to the Hindu medical science (Ayurveda), the human body is made up of seven dhatus (elements) such as rasa (chyle), rakta (blood), mansa (flesh), meda (fat), asthi (bone), majja (marrow), and sukra (semen). According to Ayurveda the seven dhatus are so called because they by their very presence sustain the human body. Rishi Sushruta says: "Out of food chyle is manufactured, from chyle blood, from blood flesh, from flesh fat, from fat bones, from bones marrow, and lastly from marrow semen." So

semen is the finest of the seven elements of the human system. It is the essence of essences. The food we eat, the Ayurvedic physicians hold, takes five days to be digested and turned into chyle; chyle takes five days to be converted into blood; blood takes five days to become flesh; flesh takes five days to become fat; fat takes five days to become bone; bone takes five days to become marrow; and marrow takes five days to become semen. The food therefore eaten by us is generally drawn into semen in the course of 35 days after digestion. One drop of semen, say the Ayurvedic texts, is made from sixty drops of blood. It is said in our scriptures: "Sukra (semen) is calm, white, cool, giver of strength, builder of body, seed of procreation, essence of the body, and the chief stay of life." Also: "As the ghee is pervasive in milk, and molasses in sugarcane juice, so the semen pervades the body of human beings."

The two testes that are located in the scrotal bag are called secretory glands. The cells of the testes are endowed with the peculiar property of secreting semen from the blood. Just as bees collect honey in the honeycomb drop by drop, so also the cells of the testes gather semen drop by drop from the blood. The seminal fluid is taken by two ducts or tubes to the *vesiculae seminalis*. Under excitement it is thrown out by special ducts, called ejaculatory ducts, into the urethra where it is mixed with the prostatic juice and goes out. In a wet dream it may be outflow of prostatic juice only. The spermatic secretion in men is continuous; it must either be reabsorbed into or expelled from the system. Prof. Gurudas Gupta, M.A. in his Bengali book on *Student Life* gives the following description of how semen is prepared and preserved in the body:

"The blood-current is very slow in the testicles which retain many substances from the blood and produce what is known as semen. There are in the testicles many fine tubes that join together and form a big tube which is the passage for semen. This big tube is long enough and spreads from the rectum to the abdomen and enters the urethra. Before entering into the bladder the big tube expands and joins a bag in which semen is stored; the bag is situated very close to the rectum and the bladder. Before being joined with the bladder the big tube has become very pointed and is like rubber with power of contraction and expansion. But naturally it remains contracted and does not allow the semen to go out. When, the seminal vesicles are contracted, the end of the big tube expands and vice versa. The more the end of the big tube is tight, the more one can retain semen. Semen is always produced drop by drop in the testicles and passing through the big tube is preserved in the bag; but as the bladder is closed by the end of the big tube, semen cannot enter into the bladder. By excitement semen while coming out of the testicles goes through the urethra without entering into the bag. When there is no need for going out it is stored in the bag. When the bag is full, it percolates through the small pores of the bag and mixes with the blood. At that time it looks like white cells of the blood. They are so subtle that they cannot be seen separate in the blood even by means of the microscope like the white corpuscles of the blood which have the power of preventing disease, recouping wounds, cuts, bruises and creating new flesh, etc. That is why the more one can retain this substance in the blood the more is one away from disease. That is why a brahmachari does not fall a victim to disease and even if he falls ill he recovers sooner than incontinent persons. Semen after

being mixed with blood again comes back to the testicles and with other new materials turns into stronger and dearer semen. This new substance passing through the big tube enters the bag again. In course of time it goes to the blood again when the blood is more vitalized. Again it comes to the testicles and is converted into still stronger and purer semen. If the semen is not lost it becomes gradually stronger and stronger and strengthens the mind and body. When semen is seen through a microscope it is found surrounded by an infinite number of protoplasmic cells like tiny tadpoles which are nothing but albumen. This albumen strengthens the nervous system and when it is lost our nervous system becomes weak. What is called excitement is nothing but the agitation of the nervous system. So we should not think such thoughts or do such deeds as may in any way excite our nervous system.

"The bladder, stomach and the bag of semen are placed together closely. If one swells, there is possibility of the outgoing of semen. That is why we should not put off our calls of nature, i.e., passing urine and stool. If in the morning, three hours after midday meal and in the afternoon we drink water our system will be flushed. Retention of semen creates the eighth dhatu called Ojas in our body. Ojas is what is called by the Westerners human magnetism. Ojas is the spiritual force and true builder of personality. The Bhagavata says: 'The essence of the seven dhatus from rasa to shukra is known as Ojas which though pervading the whole body lies mainly in the heart. Cheerfulness, development, and strength of the body depends on the growth of ojas; its absence leads to death. It is the main prop of life. Enthusiasm, merit, patience, grace and beauty and other attributes pertaining to the body are born of this substance called Ojas.'"

Rishi Sushruta says: "The best essence of the seven dhatus from rasa to shukra is verily the Ojas, that is power."

Sharangadhar says: "Ojas pervades the whole body and is soothing, cool, steady, white and soma-like and is very conducive to the strength and development of the body."

From this it is perfectly clear that semen is the most precious substance in human system. That is why it is said in the Shivasamhita that retention of semen is life and its loss is death. We should therefore endeavor our level best to conserve every drop of this precious substance.

Guru Dattatreya says: "By a sexual act semen is lost and by the loss of semen life is wasted and incapability grows."

Rightly it has been said by the wise that chastity is life and continence is heaven; but sexuality is death and lust leads to hell. Our scriptures designate brahmacharya as the "great vow of ordinance" or Mahavrata, because of its unsurpassed benefits and because of difficulty of achieving perfection in it.

A student of Dhanvantari, the father of Ayurveda, approached him after completing his full course of Ayurveda under him and said, "Bhagavan, teach me the secret of health." Dhanvantari replied, "Shukra (semen) is verily Atman (soul). The secret of health lies in preserving this vital fluid. He who wastes this energy will have no development, physical, moral and mental."

Lord Siva says in the Jnana-Sankalini Tantra: "Torturing the body is no austerity. Continence is the best austerity. A man of unbroken continence is not a man, but a god."

Lord Siva himself further says: "What is there in this world that cannot be achieved, when one preserves this jewel of semen, by whose power I have so much glory in the whole universe?"

Sri Ramakrishna says: "He who can give up the sex-idea can spurn the world."

"Continence being established, strength of body and vigor of mind is gained," says Patanjali Rishi.

It is said in our scriptures that continence is the negation of eight kinds of sexuality described in the following verses: "Thinking, hearing and talking of the sex; playing with, looking at, and conversing with the opposite sex in secret; attempting at, and finally the performance of, the sexual act; these are the eight kinds of sexuality according to the wise. Continence, which is not doing any of these, should be practiced by those who want self-mastery."

To harbour impure thoughts in the mind is a kind of incontinence. Christ rightly says: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt. V. 28).

Power of lust

How powerful is lust and how hard to conquer lust and how difficult it is to eradicate it is well illustrated by the following narrative. In spite of our constant vigilance and circumspection, one cannot say when he will fall a victim to lust. The young aspirants should never be certain of the conquest of lust.

Once upon a time Vyasadeva in the course of his discourse to his students observed that brahmacharins should very carefully avoid the contact of women, even of virgins (bramacharinis). At this Jaimini, the author of Purva Mimansa, told Vyasa that he was so well-established in continence that no object of temptation, nor even a young woman could attract him. Vyasa, however, warned him not to be over-confident in this slippery path of continence and advised him to be more vigilant. After some time the Muni told his disciples that he was going on a pilgrimage and would return after some months. On leaving his hermitage, he assumed the form of an exquisitely beautiful woman with charming face and piercing eyes. The woman was standing under a tree at dusk, when the sky became covered with dark clouds and rains began to fall. Jaimini happened to pass by that way and seeing the girl helpless felt pity on her and said to her, "Dear sister, you may come to my hermitage close by and take shelter there for the night." On enquiry when she came to know from Jaimini that he was alone in the hermitage and there was no lady, she told him that it was not proper for her, a young virgin, to spend a night with a brahmachari. But when Jaimini assured her that he was firmly established in continence and she had no fear from him, she agreed and went to the hermitage. The woman lay inside and Jaimini outside the room. At the dead of night lust stole into the mind of Jaimini who then on the plea of bad weather went inside the room and lay there. At last he was overcome with lust and was about to

embrace the lady when Vyasa reassumed his original form and scolded his disciple for false vanity and pride.

It is well-nigh impossible to eradicate lust and those who surrender to God and protect themselves by intense prayer and meditation and good company can alone escape. To look upon women as mothers or different human forms of divinity is a very effective way of getting rid of lust. Bhagavan Sri Krishna says in the Gita that lust is the strongest passion and the worst enemy of man. It is indeed very difficult to control it. Sri Krishna says in the Gita again that he who can control the impulse of lust can alone be happy and prosperous. Bhartrihari, author of the *Vairagya Shatak* says: "Once a day I take that tasteless food which I get by begging; I use the earth as bed; the body is my only attendant, and a worn-out blanket with patches all over is my dress; but alas! lust does not leave me." Jerome writes to the virgin Eustochium about his struggle for abstinence and the power of lust: "Oh! how many times when in the desert, in that vast solitude which burnt by the heat of the sun offers but a horrible dwelling to monks, I imagined among the delights of Rome; I was done. My limbs were covered by a wretched sack, and my skin was as black as an Ethiopian's. Every day I wept and groaned, and if 1 was unwillingly overcome by sleep, my lean body lay on the bare earth. I say nothing of my food and drink, for in the desert even the invalids have no drink but cold water. Well, I who out of fear for hell, had condemned myself to this prison, companion of scorpion and wild beasts, often seemed in imagination among a band of girls. My face was pale with fasting and my mind within my frigid body was burning with desire; the fires of lust would still flame up in a body that already seemed to be dead."

Some of the well-known women of early Sanskrit literature like Gargi in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Sulabha in the Mahabharata and Sabari in the Ramayana, lived celibate lives.

Means of attaining perfect continence

Once I asked a great saint: What is continence? I expected that his reply would consist of some moral rules and regulations. But, to my surprise, he said: ''Keep your mind as simple, innocent, pure and unattached as that of a child; and that is continence." And the same great soul was again asked by me the question as how to conquer lust, to which he replied: "Continence means absence of lust. You cannot conquer lust, for it is the finest form of energy. Energy cannot be destroyed; this is proved by science. You have got to forget lust; you have to re-direct, transcend and transform it. Love love, love culture, love knowledge. This is the best way to forget lust. One of the best methods of controlling lust and observing continence is the love of knowledge."

Sri Aurobindo observes in his "Bases of Yoga" as follows: "The contrary opinion (about continence) may be due to the idea that sex is a natural part of the human vital physical whole, a necessity like food and sleep and that its total inhibition may lead to unbalancing and to serious disorders. It is a fact that sex suppressed in outward action but indulged in other ways may lead to disorders of the system and brain troubles.

That is the root of the medical theory which discourages sexual abstinence. But I have observed that these things happen only when there is either secret indulgence of a perverse kind of subtle vital way by imagination or by an invisible vital interchange of an occult kind. I do not think harm ever occurs when there is a true spiritual effort at mastery and abstinence. It is now held by many medical men in Europe that sexual abstinence, if it is genuine, is beneficial; for the element in the retas which feeds the energies of the system mental, vital and physical and that justifies the Indian idea of brahmacharya, the transformation of retas into ojas and the raising of its energies upward so that they may change into a spiritual force."

In another place of his book Sri Aurobindo remarks, "As to sexual impulse, regard it not as something sinful and horrible and attractive at the same time but as a mistake and wrong movement of the lower nature. Reject it entirely not by struggling with it, but by drawing back from it, detaching yourself and refusing your consent; look at it as something not your own but imposed on you by a force of nature outside you. Refuse all consent to the imposition. If anything in your vital nature consents, insist on that part of you withdrawing its consent. Call in the Divine Force to help you in your withdrawal and refusal. If you can do this quietly and resolutely and patiently, in the end your inner will will prevail against the habit of outer nature.

"The Sadhaka (aspirant) has to turn away entirely from the invasion of the vital and the physical by the sex-impulse; for if he does not conquer the sex-impulse, there can be no settling in the body of the divine consciousness, and the divine ananda. It is true that mere suppression or holding down of desire is not enough, not by itself truly effective, but that does not mean that desires are to be indulged; it means that desires have not merely to be suppressed but rejected from the nature. In place of desire, there must be a single-minded aspiration towards the Divine."

As for love, the love must be turned singly towards the Divine. What men call by that name is a vital interchange for mutual satisfaction of desire, vital impulse or physical pleasure. It has to be said that the total elimination of the sex impulse is one of the most difficult means in sadhana and one must be prepared for it to take time. But its total disappearance has been achieved, and a practical liberation crossed, only by occasional dream-movements from the subconscient.

Lilly Heber records in her "Krishnamurti and the World Crisis" the following interesting observations on continence made by J. Krishnamurti. Sri Krishnamurti said, "I was asked the other day why I did not marry. I will give you the reason. I am not against marriage. Marriage–that which society calls marriage–is brought about because men and women are lonely. Now if you surmount all loneliness you need not marry. You are everything. You are no longer lonely. You no longer need support, encouragement, the lesson of constant adjustment to the point of view of another. The purpose of marriage is to make an effort together, man and woman, to grow, to adjust, to understand, to develop various qualities. But if you are in love with life itself, in which is the expression both of man and woman, then you are adjusting yourself to that totality all the time, and you are beyond the need for the experience of constant adjustment of points of view. Then you need not marry. But don't deceive yourselves."

To a question: "Can a married person who is living a normal sex life achieve the supreme goal? Is the ascetic life which we assume to be your mode of living, essential to achievement?" Sri Krishnamurti, an ethical teacher of world-fame, answers: "The realization of Truth is the consummation of energy. To reach that consummation, energy must be concentrated in deep contemplation which is the natural result of action, the right judgment of values. I lead what you call an ascetic life because of this concentration of energy, which is the freedom of self-consciousness. I am not saying that you should imitate me. I do not say that you cannot realize this contemplation because you are married. But a man who desires the realization of completeness wholly, permanently, must have all his energy concentrated.

"A man who is a slave to passion, to lust, to sensation, cannot realize this."

Sri Krishnamurti continued: "The fact is that pure emotion is detached from its own objects. If I love someone truly, deeply, then I am detached, for true love is in itself complete. What passes by the name of love is but empty emotion, and depends on another for its very existence. If affection is bound up with the individual, it must be limited. If you cling to another for your happiness, you are all the time afraid to lose them, either through death or through their affection being transferred to another.

"Personal love, with its possessiveness, its fears, its jealousies, its demands, inevitably creates a barrier between itself and the object of its love." Here we are facing the ever-recurring tragedy of personal love: "The pain of love in all its forms is created by this barrier, whereas true love which is complete in itself, is free from all sorrow."

To another question: "Is the physical expression of sexual love a limitation of love and life? If so, how may we get rid of it?" Sri Krishnamurti remarked: "If you are a slave to sensation, if you are attached for your happiness to this satisfaction, to this sensation–then it is a limitation of love and life…. A man who would be free of delusion and craving must have perfect control of the body–control through understanding, not through suppression or repression. Control comes with the desire for the understanding of the purpose of individual existence and its fulfillment. Most people suppress their desires through fear; but this is not control, it is death. True control is suppleness, activity, the body being fully active but under restraint….

"I use the word control as self-imposed discipline with understanding–not the stupid control which leaves you bitter, hard, cruel, and ruthless. Self-imposed discipline is full of kindness, thoughtfulness, is tender and not harsh….

"When you understand desire, whence it springs and whither it is going, desire becomes a precious jewel.... Such desire is the source of true discipline–not set discipline, but discipline that varies progressively until you arrive at pure being.

"The whole problem of sexuality has its root in the 'I' consciousness. While the 'I' consciousness exists, the 'opposites' of existence will have free play, and there will be attraction and repulsion between men and women.

"Passion will exist so long as both men and women are bound by the sorrow of incompleteness."

Swami Ashokananda in his *Spiritual Practice* (pp. 130-140) gives some useful advice for the practice of continence. He says that continence has been differently interpreted

and doubtless it has very many implications. But its simple and essential meaning is abstention from sexual thought and deed in every form. Sexual act, the grossest form of sexuality, is of course to be given up entirely. But persistence in the practice of continence reveals the fact that this gross form is the expression of the inner impulse. The control and eradication of these impulses is the main thing. Without that, mere outer abstention avails little. Sex-consciousness is deeply rooted in our minds. It may almost be said to be contemporaneous with the very beginning of the individual life. The philosophers observed long ago that there exists an intimate relation between sexual activity and imagination. The sexual emotion stirs our psychological being, troubles the senses and infatuates reason. The less one experiences the emotion, the better is his well-being. "Have we said everything as to the sexual emotion," writes M. Ruyssen, "when we have traced the eddy which it excites on the surface of our consciousness? Have we not on the contrary the deep impression that something else is stirring far below, that our inmost self is moved by a force at once close to us and yet stretching infinitely beyond us?"

The idea of body is in a sense the prop of the sexual consciousness. Therefore Sri Ramakrishna said that until a man has realized God he cannot completely rid himself of lust. One day Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was asked by one of his young disciples: "Sir, how to conquer lust? I am trying my best to control my mind and eliminate evil thoughts but they come in spite of all these and destroy my peace of mind." Sri Ramakrishna said to him: "Lust does not leave us finally before God-vision. Even after God-vision it remains in some form or other in of course very small measure as long as the body lasts; but then it cannot raise its head. Do you think lust has left me altogether? Once I thought that I had conquered lust. I was then sitting in the Panchavati Grove. Just then a torrent of lust arose in my mind and was about to overtake me when I fell on the ground and began to rub my face against the earth and prayed to the Divine Mother saying, 'I have done wrong. Save me this time, O Mother! I will never think in future that I have conquered lust.' Then it subsided through the divine grace. The fact is that the tide of overflowing youth has come, so you find it difficult to stay it. When the flood comes, all rice fields become full of water. But in the Kali Yuga mental sins are not to be counted as sins. If once in a while an evil thought comes to the mind, do not be dejected. These are like excretions of the body and are physiologically natural to the physical system. After passing stool or urine nobody thinks what he has done. If once in a while an impure thought crosses the mind, do not attach any importance to it. Gradually it will subside."

To Swami Yogananda, a disciple, Sri Ramakrishna said in reply to his question as how to conquer lust: "Repeat the Name of the Lord by clapping your hands morning and evening." Mahatma Gandhi also testifies that the repetition of God's name drives away all evil thoughts from the mind.

To recognize sexual difference in men and women is a kind of sexuality. When one has completely eliminated lust one will not feel that difference. Only the soul will be apparent, existing in all, beyond all distinctions of sex and body. Continence has all these wide significances among its implications. But of course in the beginning one

cannot rise to such heights but must begin on the lower plane. Nevertheless, the goal should never be lost sight of.

Without effort continence can never be successfully practiced. The aspirant will have to win every inch of the arduous uphill way with great struggle which will bring in return benefits in abundance. A yearning for spiritual life is the primary condition of the practice of continence. The secret is to forget the body. It is often found that being intent on the practice of continence too much attention may be paid to small physiological details and the details of food and living. There may too much consciousness of the practice of continence. This ultra-awareness is psychologically harmful and in the long run impedes the success. The more we dwell on sexuality whether with the desire of indulging or checking it, the less shall we succeed in getting rid of it. To forget it is the best and safest way to its conquest.

We must avoid contact with people, places or things that are reminiscent of sexuality. It is very urgent that we should give up the company of those who indulge in sexuality. As the sun always radiates heat, a flower its fragrance and a dead body a bad smell, so the impure persons give out an aura of impurity which is very contagious. Hence it is best to avoid sitting or sleeping with such persons as far as practicable. The world is full of temptations and distractions. Hence an aspirant of continence should live with strict care and caution. He should move in the society as Sukhadev, Vyasa's son, walked in the streets of Mithila with a pot brimful of water on his head at the instruction of King Janaka. In the streets there were dance and music of young women, and a lot of other distractions. Sukhadev did not care to notice any of these distractions and returned to the palace of Janaka without spilling a drop of water from the pot. Unless we practice utter indifference to objects of temptations, we will be carried away by them.

There is no need for perturbation if there are nocturnal emissions. They do not matter much if they happen once or twice a month. Let us press forward in spite of these. By and by, as our mind becomes calm and pure, even the seminal discharges during sleep will become rare. We need not be afraid if night pollutions happen once in a while. There are few fortunate souls in the world who are free from it. It is no use taking medicines or being moody. That brings contrary results. Night pollutions are mostly due to indigestion, constipation and dream in sleep. It is a very good and beneficial practice to observe partial or complete fast on the day after a nocturnal emission praying to and thinking of God. This has a wonderful counter-effect. Nocturnal emissions generally take place in the fourth quarter of the night, i.e., after 3 a.m. One should pass urine and stool as soon as one feels the call of nature. It is a preventive habit to rise between 2 and 4 a.m. and pass urine to keep the bladder empty in the small hours of the morning.

Anyway, one should leave the bed at least one hour before sunrise and practice concentration and meditation which in our opinion is the best means to observe continence. Constant wearing of a kaupin day and night checks effectively excitement of the sex organ. The aspirant should read such books as will fill him with noble thoughts and he should meditate over the lives of holy men. The antidote for impure

thoughts is pure thoughts. A heart-felt prayer every day for purity makes one progressively pure. The first and foremost thing in the practice of continence is the realization of its absolute necessity in life and a spiritual view of life and society.

Before sleep it is good to read religious books, think of pure thoughts and meditate. These good thoughts will pervade our unconscious mind during sleep.

Great men of East and West on continence

Before we conclude we present the reader with the following sayings of some great men of East and West on the creative power of continence.

Sri Ramakrishna

Continence increases infinitely the power of retentiveness and remembrance. Try to gain absolute mastery over your sexual instinct. If one succeeds in doing this a physiological change is produced in the body by the development of a nerve known by the name of medha, whose function it is to transmute lower energies into the higher. The knowledge of the higher Self is gained after the formation of this medha nerve.

Patanjali

Continence being established infinite energy is gained.

Vyasadev

Attainment of continence is the secret of all occult powers and makes one capable of transmitting powers to others.

Pascal

Those who believe that happiness is in the body and misery in whatever hinders sexual pleasure, how they become satiated with it and die of it!

Michelet

To be strong, be pure.

M. Justin Godard

No one but imbeciles mock at chastity.

Thomas Mann

The future is for the nations who are chaste.

Bhagavan Buddha

Absolute continence is the key to Buddhahood.

Swami Shivananda–disciple of Sri Ramakrishna

Continence is the *sine qua non* of all spiritual experiences.

Swami Vivekananda

Continence means chastity in thought, word and deed in all times and in all conditions. The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power. Without chastity there cannot be any spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual guides of humanity have been perfectly continent and this is what gave them power. Whosoever practices unbroken continence for a period of twelve years will be the recipient of all extraordinary powers. If you want to be great, preserve continence without a break. Absolute observance of continence is essential to become a spiritual teacher. Continence is the foundation of the Vedic wisdom. Continent life is a life of crystal purity. By simple practice of strict continence all learning can be mastered in a very short time and one obtains unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. It is owing to this want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our century. Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power. The very fact of being unmarried is a spiritual asset.

Swami Brahmananda–disciple of Sri Ramakrishna

Without brahmacharya (continence), it is not possible for anyone to hold fast to great ideals. To secure the full development and vitality of the body, brain and mind continence is essential. Those who observe strict continence develop a strong memory and a remarkable capacity for understanding. By means of continence a special nerve is developed which brings about these special powers. Do you know why our great teachers have laid so much emphasis upon continence? It is because they knew that if a man fails in this respect everything is lost. The strict brahmachari does not lose his vitality. He may not look like a great athlete but the development of the brain is so fine that his capacity for grasping super-sensuous things is remarkable. There are certain rules which a brahmachari should observe. He must avoid exciting food, over-sleep, over-exercise, laziness, bad company and evil conversation. It is continence that strengthens the body and mind. Without continence the mind never gains the power of concentration and meditation. Our shastras say that by observing continence for twelve years very strictly God becomes easy to be realized.

Shankaracharya

Brahmacharya or spotless chastity is the best of penances. A celibate who is endowed with spotless chastity is not a human being indeed but a god. To the celibate who conserves the semen with great efforts what is there unattainable in this world? By the power of the conservation of semen, one will become just like myself.

Sri Krishna

Lust ruins life, luster, strength, vitality, memory, wealth, fame, holiness and devotion to Truth.

Narada

Caution in diet is of three-fold value but abstinence from sexuality is of four-fold

value. Though the sexual propensities are at first like ripples, they acquire the proportion of sea waves on account of bad company.

Shiva Samhita

Death is hastened by loss of semen but life is prolonged by preserving it. Everybody therefore must try his best to lead a life of continence.

Buddha

A wise man should avoid married life as if it were a burning pit of live coals. From the contact comes sensation, from sensation thirst. By ceasing from contact, one is saved from all sinfulness.

Srimad Bhagavat

It is a sin to look at men or women with sexual motives.

Dr. Louis

Debility of intellect, especially of the memory, characterizes the mental alienation of the licentious.

Mahabharata

Bhisma says to Yudhisthira, "O King, know that in this world, there is nothing that cannot be attained by one who remains from birth to death a perfect celibate. In one person there is knowledge of the four Vedas and in another, there is perfect celibacy; of these the latter is superior to the former who is wanting in celibacy."

Warning:
Sex May Be Hazardous to Your Health
(Extracts)
Dr. Edwin Flatto

Dr. Flatto held degrees in Medicine and Osteopathy and was the author of eight books in the fields of exercise, physical therapy, and nutrition, and has authored over 2000 published articles which have appeared in leading medical, scientific, and health journals worldwide. He passed away in 2011.

Warning: sex may be hazardous to your health!

…"If sex is hazardous to my health, I don't want to know about it!" is the reaction some people will have to this book. I am firmly dedicated to the proposition that information has never hurt anyone. When a person is armed with the facts, it enables him to make intelligent decisions.…

Let us start with the premise that sex is a necessary function. Is this a true statement? Physiologically, the sex act is not in the same category as other natural, normal, bodily functions such as eating, breathing, sleeping, defecating, or urinating. Of course we cannot live without any of these bodily functions being constantly and regularly performed. But millions of healthy individuals have demonstrated that a person can live a long and healthy life without ever using the sexual function. The idea of necessity prevails because it fits in with inclination. In fact, there is no known disease attributable to abstinence, but there are many diseases attributable to the opposite condition of doing it too much. This book is by no means advocating complete abstinence or celibacy as a way of life. I am merely pointing out at the beginning that there is no harm in remaining continent. Sex is not a necessary function which must be performed regularly. The organs and glands which control reproduction are not like our muscles which must be exercised regularly in order to function properly. Indeed, the opposite is true: the reproductive glands are more efficient and potent when given a period of rest.…

The premise that sex is natural must also be rejected. It depends on how it is used. Nature obviously designed the sexual apparatus to be used for procreation, not recreation. If recreation or pleasure per se were what our Creator had in mind when He designed our reproductive organs, there would be no need for all the attention, time, and tremendous sums of money spent in searching for a reliable contraceptive without harmful or undesirable side effects.…

Man is the only animal that nature allows, in his natural environment, to perform the sex act whenever he chooses to do so. All the other animals have definite mating periods when the female will accept the male organ. These are the short periods when

the female is fertile, or in "rut" or "heat." The female dog will not permit a male dog to enter her sexually unless she is in "heat" which usually occurs about once every six months. The same pattern is followed throughout the animal kingdom. Birds generally mate about once a year or during the Spring. Sheep and goats mate once or twice a year during their mating seasons. Wild pigs mate once a year, and the elephant, in its wild state, mates only about once every two years.

Reproduction is essentially catabolic throughout the animal and vegetable kingdoms. That is, it is a movement towards death. The Pacific salmon, trout, shad, and several other varieties of anadromous fish die soon after spawning. The male drone bee dies almost immediately after copulation. Even more vivid is the sex life of the praying mantis. In his book, *Love and Will*, Rollo May states: "The female devours the head of the male as he copulates, and his death throes unite with his copulatory spasms to make the thrusts stronger. Inseminated, the female proceeds to eat him to store up food for the new offspring." The black widow spider does essentially the same thing and has earned its name from this action.

In the plant kingdom, after a plant bears fruit it weakens and often dies. Farmers often make it a practice to prevent a plant or tree from "going to seed" in order to strengthen it. Most fruit-bearing trees do not produce fruit until they are five to ten years old. This allows their biological force to be transformed into growth and strength rather than reproduction.

In athletics, most coaches and trainers forbid sexual relations before a contest. Prize fighters observe strict sexual abstinence during training and before a bout.…

The human seed, of course, contains all the essential elements necessary to create another human being when it is united with the ovum. It contains forces capable of creating life. Doesn't common sense decree that such a vital fluid be carefully conserved rather than thoughtlessly squandered? . . .

Diet unquestionably affects sexual desire and ability. Meat, alcohol, tobacco, salt, spices, and all animal products such as milk and eggs, increase sexual desire. For example, most meat eaters who become vegetarians will, within a few weeks notice a decrease in sex desire.… Animal products, especially meat, contain uric acid which irritates the joints and glands. Thus, the prostate gland, irritated by uric acid, sends a false spark to the mental processes which stimulates an erotic response. Hence, many men find themselves sexually aroused even when there is no female within miles. While flesh foods, condiments, and liquor may stimulate sexual feelings in the mind, the performance of the body is in no way improved. An example of this is demonstrated in the tiny Asian country of Hunza, where the people are predominantly vegetarian and are still virile long past the century mark.

The most virile animals are all vegetarians. Take the stallion. He can service a dozen mares. The bull's sexual prowess is legendary.… [T]he rabbit, whose reproductive powers are axiomatic, is a 100 percent vegetarian.…

Still the myth persists that oysters, steak, liquor, etc., increase sexual ability. As I mentioned previously, stimulants increase the desire but decrease the ability. I am sure you will agree it is far better to have the desire decreased and the ability intensified!…

Many men, even after having been convinced of the harm they are doing to themselves by over-indulging in sex, still persist in their old habits. They use the excuse that for them, self-discipline in sex would be impossible. That it is difficult, I agree. But impossible–no!

It is good for you to do things that are difficult. Self-discipline is a quality that becomes stronger with use. It is a mental muscle.…

I only advocate temperance. Licentiousness debases a man's higher nature. To assert that mankind is incapable of practicing that which requires self-restraint is to renounce man's higher, though perhaps latent, nature. Sensual men seeking to gratify every appetite will only receive from nature their just reward: painful sickness and premature death.

Sexual gluttony

…"Priests' Disease" is…a layman's term and is a misnomer. It is based on the false assumption that continence or insufficient sexual intercourse must lead to congestive prostatitis.… [S]tatistically [priests] suffer significantly less from it than the general population. However, the point is if a man allows his mind to dwell on sex fifteen minutes out of every hour or more, or if he has not learned how to discipline his mind and is constantly keeping his genital organ in a state of excitement, that man is not being continent.

When a man becomes sexually excited, either by thinking about sex or physical contact, the brain sends a signal to the nervous system and the entire pelvic area becomes congested with blood. Blood flows into the spongy compartments of the corpora cavernosa of the male genital, expanding the tubular rods, making them rigid, while the outlet valves close so that the blood remains imprisoned, causing the penis to become swollen and stiff. Hormones are released into the bloodstream stimulating the adrenal glands. The metabolic rate is speeded up; sperm production increases. The prostate becomes engorged with prostatic fluid.

All of the above, of course, is the mind preparing the body for the supreme act of reproduction as nature intended it.

But foolish man has other ideas. Recreation, not procreation is his objective. A single episode will do no harm, but imagine if this erotic stimulation of the body occurs every hour of every day! It is like turning in a false fire alarm fifteen times a day. How long can a body stand this abuse without rebelling?

How can a man like this learn to discipline his thoughts? First, unnatural stimulation of the desire must be lessened. There is a commercial interest in promoting self-indulgence and over-indulgence. Sexual gluttony is glorified rather than viewed with repugnance. He must learn to recognize this and fight the inclination. He must learn to steer away from erotic movies, literature, and all the other stimuli that are unnaturally causing his mind to dwell on sex.

As has been demonstrated, caged animals indulge in sexual intercourse and masturbate much more frequently than animals in their natural habitat. The human animal acts similarly. Physical and mental inertia or inactivity must be avoided. So, the

second rule is to keep the mind and body constructively occupied.

Most zoos do not feed their animal population naturally. For example, at the Central Park Zoo in New York City I witnessed gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans, and monkeys being fed loaves of white bread for half of their diet. Now it is obvious that no ape or monkey in their natural environment eats a loaf of bread for his dinner. His constitution was designed to live on uncooked fruits like berries and bananas, vegetables, herbs, raw nuts, and seeds. As a result of this unnatural diet, these apes and monkeys grow fat, become lazy, and either masturbate or indulge in sexual intercourse to the limit of their ability and whenever the opportunity presents itself. So, the third rule is to eat a natural diet and don't overeat.

There are some men who try to prolong sexual intercourse by using various creams which serve to numb the penis. Others have trained themselves to hold back their climax. Sexual excitement involves not only the penis filling with blood, but all of the pelvic organs including the prostate. When the prostate is continually subjected to this engorgement, it leads to prostatitis.

After class, one of my students, a 24-year-old lad, confessed to me that he had had sex from one to three times a day for the past eight years. He never had any trouble before but now he had a urethral discharge and pain on urinating. He was medically examined and no gonorrhea bacilli were found. This man had developed an irritated prostate by over-straining himself in the sex department. The cure for this condition is simply the opposite of the cause. In this case the cause was overactivity of the sexual glands and the cure was to give them a rest by practicing abstention for a while. Remember, the organs of generation are essentially glands, and glands, unlike the muscles, do not require exercise to maintain their function. So, the fourth rule is: Don't be a sexual glutton.

Some people's entire lives are ones of self-indulgence. They claim that self-discipline is impossible for them. The secret of acquiring self-discipline is to practice it! It is like a muscle. The more you use it the stronger it becomes. Willpower is a force we are constantly testing. In our everyday existence we are either helping build this trait or participating in its destruction. The glutton weakens the power each time he overeats; the alcoholic whenever he succumbs to "another drink'; the smoker every time he "lights up." Each time we give in to a bad habit, we help to strengthen it. Therefore, the fifth rule is: Practice self-restraint deliberately. Concentrate on the necessity, reasons, and benefits of self-control.…

The prostate

The gland most adversely affected by sexual excess is the prostate. Practically all of the functional disturbances of the prostate gland result from its relationship to sexual activity. Many people believe that prostate disorders affect only older men, but plenty of men in their twenties, thirties, and forties have prostate disorders. Even teenagers have prostate problems. More men suffer from prostate disorders than from heart disease and cancer combined. And more than 70 percent of all males over 50 have already experienced some trouble with their prostate gland. At age 60, the incidence of

prostate troubles in males rises to 80 percent.…

Prostatic cancer is the third leading cause of cancer deaths in men over 55. Only cancer of the lung and the lower intestine kill more men. I believe there is a cause and effect relationship between sexual abuse, prostate disorders, and the fact that women outlive men.

The symptoms which accompany prostate enlargement and congestion are widespread and varied. So, often the underlying prostatic condition is overlooked and may be more common than is generally realized.…

John H. Tilden, M.D.,…wrote: "Among my patients I discovered I had quite a number of enlarged prostates at 35 to 40 years of age and very little enlargement in men of 70 years. The prostate, being continually engorged or congested (by sexual excitement) takes on a gradual enlargement of a fibrous nature. By the time middle life is attained, the gland has become a fibrous tumor. After 40 years, those who are not dead from some so-called disease brought on by such enervation, and the contingent infections that are secondary, are still slaves to the two grand dominating functions of the body that reign over it until they are forced to abdicate to reason: namely; nutrition and reproduction. When unrestrained, these functions degenerate into gluttony and sexual debauchery. Because of this reign of sensualism, the life of a man is cut down to two-thirds of what it should be…"

As I mentioned at the beginning, the main cause of prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate) is sex abuse. Excessive masturbation, excessive intercourse, prolongation of sexual excitement, or excessive prolongation of coitus, can all cause a full-blown case of prostatitis. Although an occasional indulgence may not do discernible harm, repeated habitually, the injury to the sex organs must manifest itself.

Some of my patients who were young men at the time, believing that they were immune to the harmful effects of their actions, performed the sex act for hours before ejaculating. They failed to understand the physiological fact that all this sexual excitation causes the blood to fill not only the penis, but all the pelvic reproductive organs, including the prostate. When the prostate is continually engorged and subjected to this sort of abuse, is it any surprise that it gives trouble?

Then there was the 65-year-old man, a successful business man in good health for his age, who after his wife died took as his mistress a woman in her late twenties. He had sex almost daily, and sometimes twice a day, and in less than six months had severe symptoms of prostatitis which was followed shortly by a heart attack from which he failed to recover. He paid a high price for being a "swinger."…

Preventing and correcting constipation and prostate disorders

…[A]t least 75 percent of all civilized men past the age of 50 can expect to experience at least some degree of prostate trouble. Sexual abuse is undoubtedly one of the main causes of prostatic congestion and enlargement. However, there are other contributory causes of prostate disorders. The principal ones, in my opinion, are lack of proper exercise and constipation. Conversely, proper exercise and correcting poor elimination can also be a large part of the solution.…

The normal prostate is approximately the size of a walnut and encompasses the neck of the bladder. When it swells it cuts off the tube leading from the bladder and impedes the free flow of urine. When the prostate becomes a problem, too often the only solution offered is "cut it out!"…[The author then describes various exercises designed to cure prostate problems.]

The value of seminal conservation

"The scientists of old have put great value upon the vital fluid and they have insisted upon its strong transmutation into the highest form of energy for the benefit of society." Mahatma Gandhi, 1959

Since the beginning of recorded history, sex and reproduction have been uppermost in man's thoughts. Ever since primitive man realized that there was a cause and effect relationship between sex and reproduction, he has ascribed a sacredness to the organs of generation.…

Primitive tribes and savages also had very strict taboos on sexual intercourse and certain sex practices. The general principle which such taboos express is that sex is a sacred force and is incompatible with certain conditions of the body as well as certain occupations and must not be allowed to interfere with them.…

In a study made during the Robert Mond Expedition to New Guinea (1914 to 1918), Dr. Bronislaw Malinowski, in his book, *The Sexual Life of Savages in Northwestern Melanesia*, describes some of the social customs: Sexual excess, sexual greed, or forwardness is regarded as bad and despicable in either men or women, but more especially in women.… There are a number of pursuits which, while in progress, entail abstinence from sexual intercourse and even all contact with women; such as, for example: war, overseas sailing expeditions, gardening, and certain magical rites. There are also a number of conditions under which coitus is forbidden. It is suspended during menstruation, and forbidden during pregnancy, until after weaning.…

An average ejaculation is about 2 to 5 cubic centimeters of semen and contains from 200,000,000 to 500,000,000 sperm.

Each one of these millions of sperm carry 23 chromosomes, split chromosomes, prostaglandins, genes, electricity, and all the vitamins, enzymes, and minerals necessary for the creation of another human being. In other words, it contains the life force.

These sperm are produced in the testicles. Now in many species of animals and birds the testicles do not produce sperm cells during most of the year, since nature wants to conserve this vital substance. Usually only during the autumn breeding season does nature permit them to burst into activity so that conception will take place in the Spring, the most favorable time for growth and development of the new entity. But in man, the testicles are capable of producing sperm continually, year round, if called upon to do so. It is a self-regulating mechanism. During sexual excitement much larger amounts are produced. Some men allow themselves to continually be in a state of sexual excitation and are continually manufacturing large quantities of sperm and prostatic fluid. It is as though they were driving their car at 100 miles an hour all of the

time. This, of course, is unnatural and will eventually result in physical and mental bankruptcy.…

Besides being a factory for the manufacturing of sperm, [the testicles] produce male hormones, or androgens, such as testosterone.… [I]f not ejaculated, [they] go directly into the blood stream and are carried to every part of the body. They stimulate the pituitary gland and creative centers of the brain.…

[Semen] is not a substance to be wasted lightly.… [T]he faster you use it, the more the body is forced to produce.… Your blood stream [takes] the raw materials from every part of your body, including your brain, and transport[s] them to the gonads to be used to replace expended resources.…

Venereal disease

"My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease; and there is no soundness in my flesh." King David, Thirty-Eighth Psalm

Venereal diseases are as old as history.… No nationality has escaped this abominable scourge of humanity. Syphilis was often more responsible than military action for the outcome of wars as it swept through Europe in the 1500's, disabling entire armies. The French called it the Italian Disease; the Italians, Germans, and British called it the French Disease; the Japanese called it the Castilian Disease. It was called the Disease of the Portuguese by the Persians; the Disease of the Germans by the Polish; and lastly, the Disease of the Polanders by the Russians. John Fernelius (1497-1558) is usually given credit for coining the term "venereal disease" and adopted it to "prevent national hatreds increasing from such foolish reflections." . . .

[T]he most insidious consequence of all [the] methods of artificial birth control is that they establish habits of self-indulgence rather than self-discipline, and physically deplete the vital resources in the man and enervate the entire nervous system in the woman. Clearly, the safest, surest, and cheapest method of preventing venereal disease as well as conserving the vital resources of the body is to avoid promiscuity and illicit sex relations.…

Can any reasonable person consider…sex gluttony anything but abnormal and unnatural? Is not nature, in her sometimes unfathomable wisdom, trying to tell us something? I firmly believe that all disease is a result of violating the laws of nature.…

How can a few fleeting moments of sensual gratification possibly be worth the risk of ruining health and future happiness?…

The Pill, IUDs, and King Henry VIII

Most of us have heard of the ancient Romans' and King Henry VIII's banquets, during which they gluttonously ate all that their stomachs could hold, and then promptly induced vomiting so as to empty their stomachs for further gorging. Their gluttony was not for the natural purpose of nourishing their bodies but was merely to derive sensual pleasure from the eating.…

[A] reasonable corollary can be drawn between this ancient custom of sense

gratification in eating, which is today so repulsive to all of us, and the modern contraceptive devices which attempt to accomplish the same sense gratification in the area of sex. These devices are, of course, designed to circumvent the natural consequences of a natural act. They attempt to pervert the obvious intention of nature by using sex as an instrument solely for recreation rather than procreation.…

[A]ll unnatural methods have either health or aesthetic reasons against them. They also teach people that they can use a "trick" or "device" to avoid the consequences of their actions. That these devices don't always work is attested to by the high number of abortions that are performed each year.

While the pleasure of sex for its own sake may be momentary, the unhappy consequences linger on. The birth control pill has led to much overindulgence in sex, but has not produced more satisfying relationships. The quantity of sex has increased but the evidence indicates that the quality of love and unselfish enjoyment has decreased.…

Advertising, cosmetics, clothes, movies, books, television, newspapers, magazines, theater, night clubs, and bars are all designed to stimulate and increase the sex desire. Even what we eat and drink stimulates it.… In man, like the other animals, inactivity and over-eating increase sexual desire and increased sexual activity increases the desire for food. It is a vicious circle.…

For millions of years man has existed on this planet. Until relatively recent times, no thought had been given to artificial methods of birth control as a means of stopping man's overpopulating the earth. Suddenly we are informed that man is no longer capable of exercising self-restraint in the area of sex. That only mass acceptance of birth control drugs, contraceptive devices, abortions, and emasculating surgery can save the world from famine, pestilence, and a disastrous world war.

Most people will agree that overpopulation needs to be controlled. But again, the law of cause and effect is being overlooked. Every one of us was born endowed by our Creator with all of the attributes necessary to exercise self-control over our passions. But we have been carefully taught, mostly by example, that self-discipline is not possible.

Self-discipline is a quality that must be developed through practice until it becomes second nature or automatic. It is mental muscle, and like any other muscle, it becomes stronger through use. Experience and history have amply demonstrated that self-indulgence as a way of life downgrades the culture, weakens the character, and reverses the upward evolutionary development of people.…

Sex has become an exploited debauch instead of a God-given biological force. Nature binds health, wisdom, happiness, and virtue together by an indissoluble chain. The common hope of all mankind is that a more self-disciplined and more enlightened humanity may soon emerge.…

Abortion

There is little doubt that there has existed and still exists a double standard of sex ethics. Men have always had a very low standard, or no standard, of sex ethics to live

by, while women have had a high standard to which they were expected to conform. Low-cost and easily obtained abortions, birth control drugs, IUDs, and other contraceptives have largely overcome women's biological restraints by allowing them to indulge in sexual relations limitlessly without the natural consequences of pregnancy and childbirth. Women may now indulge in sex, not for the natural purpose of creating another human life, but for the sole purpose of pleasure. Instead of insisting that man rise to her higher standards, woman has lowered her standards to equal his and considers this "liberation."

While men physically excel women in strength, there is overwhelming evidence that women exceed men morally. Women have been treated as chattels and sexual conveniences by men. Indeed, throughout a great part of the world, they are still so treated. Men in the western cultures are possessed by sex. They seem to be in a chronic state of sex irritation and are ready to indulge in sexual intercourse with any female at almost any time. This is not the case with the female who has to be psychologically prepared before she is willing to accept the advances of the male. The violence and crime that has now become so commonplace, by and large, was brought about by men, not women. Our prisons are not filled and overflowing with women, but with men. Wars are started and fought not by women, but by men. Pornographic books, magazines, and X-rated movies have been supported by a predominately male clientele; not a female one. The sensuous man is only too happy that women have sunk to his level and given in to his lusts. Abortions, birth control pills, and all the rest of these devices permit him to use her body for his lusts and the foolish women who have not yet learned how to say "no" think they are being "liberated" by all this!

Even under the best medical conditions legal abortions sometimes result in uncontrollable hemorrhaging, blood clots in the lung, anesthetic deaths, septic infections, perforation of the uterus, hepatitis, and sterility.

After a woman gives birth to two children, "there is a steady rise in the infant mortality rate," and each succeeding offspring is slightly weaker, assuming everything else remains equal. An abortion can be as physically draining on a woman as if she actually gave birth. Some women even use abortions as their only means of birth control and have several abortions before finally giving birth. Those children, born after the abortion will be genetically handicapped and less likely to survive compared to their brothers and sisters born before the abortion(s). Therefore, an abortion may even penalize a woman's future children.

Another latent effect is that the scarring from an abortion induces early labor and miscarriage in later pregnancies. Is that fair to future children?

And what will it do to the moral and spiritual evolvement? Abortion thwarts the ends of nature. It degrades the individual as well as the entire human community of which they are members. Self-indulgence rather than self-discipline must become a way of life under such circumstances. How can people learn respect for the sacredness of life? Because a baby in its mother's body cannot communicate with us does not mean that he or she does not have the right to live. Human life is sacred. Man's upward spiritual evolvement depends upon his recognizing and practicing this universal

principle.

Women, too!

A woman's sex life is reflected in her personality and demeanor even more than a man's. Promiscuity hardens a woman and it is often mirrored in her facial expressions and conversation. It detracts from her natural softness and sensitive nature, making her callous and hard. While overindulgence in sex bankrupts a man's vital physical resources, in women it enervates the nervous system and causes nerve depletion or neurasthenia.

Too much sex, probably more than any other factor, ages a woman, in some cases, even more than it does a man. It is common knowledge that prostitutes, who work at it intensely, age quickly. Too much sex and different partners stretch a woman's vaginal and perineal muscles, leaving them flaccid, inefficient, and desensitized.…

Women, of course, have to face the biological consequences of sexual intercourse, namely pregnancy. Abstention is the best method of contraception. It is 100 percent safe and is 100 percent certain to prevent pregnancy. In addition, it is natural, has no side effects, and is available free of charge, without a prescription to everyone.… There is no artificial method of contraception that can do all this. The most efficient artificial methods of contraception also have the most serious, harmful side effects for the woman.… [A]ccording to a two-page advertisement in a leading medical journal read mainly by doctors, a popular birth control pill takes an entire page to list all of the Warnings, Contraindications, Precautions, Adverse Reactions, etc., such as: Thrombophlebitis, thromboembolic disorders, cerebral apoplexy, impaired liver function, thrombotic disorders, cerebrovascular disorders, pulmonary embolism, neuro-ocular lesions, retinal thrombosis, optic neuritis, gastro-intestinal symptoms, breakthrough bleeding, spotting, change in menstrual flow, amenorrhea, edema, chloasma, melasma, breast changes, weight gain, cervical erosion, suppression of lactation, cholestatic jaundice, migraine, rash (allergic), rise in blood pressure, mental depression. The following adverse reactions have been reported: Pre-menstrual-like syndrome, loss of sex desire, headache, nervousness, dizziness, fatigue, backache, hirsutism, loss of scalp hair, erythema multiforme, erythema nodosum, hemorrhagic eruption, and itching.

And there is, of course, one other adverse reaction that is not listed–DEATH.

Too frequent sexual intercourse increases a woman's chances of getting cancer of the cervix. Women starting sexual relations at too early an age also increase their chances of getting cervical cancer.…

Love versus sex

"Love and lust are as far asunder as a flower garden is from a brothel." Henry David Thoreau

Love and sex are antagonistic to each other. They are different in origin and nature and are based on opposing principles. Sex can be casual about its object; love cannot. Love is always a personal relationship; this is not necessarily so with sex.

Love by itself is elevating; sex by itself is denigrating. Pure love is ennobling; pure sex is demoralizing. Love is invigorating; sex is enervating. Love is unselfish; sex is self-seeking. Love is spiritual; sex is only physical. The trouble is we tend to confuse love and sex in a state of intense infatuation.…

Nature has provided that the reproductive seed of all life forms contains the vital forces and most valuable material to best propagate its species. To squander this vital substance as a form of amusement or to satisfy one's carnal urge is to dissipate one's health and strength.

In all forms of life, the sexual act is essentially catabolic, or a destructive utilization of energy, in the male. Important body cells are sacrificed in order to provide for reproduction. Nature, of course, deems the continuation of the species worth the sacrifice. When the reproductive cells, or semen, in the male are not used, they are returned to the bloodstream to be utilized by the body for other purposes essential to the highest welfare of the individual organism.

This is the physiological basis upon which sexual discipline is predicated. In our present-day society, however, the sex urge is generally pandered to and exploited.

When a man overeats and as a consequence suffers gas pains and indigestion, the "cure" lies in the removal of the cause. Obviously he should stop eating for awhile and allow nature a chance to normalize the condition. Instead, human frailty is encouraged by cures in the form of nostrums and palliatives.

Likewise, if people continually overuse their genitals for self-indulgence and eventually reap the consequences of their actions, the cure lies in their becoming aware of the havoc they are doing to their bodies and learning the benefits of self-discipline.

In the present era, birth control pills have also become indicative of a way of life. No honest concern of the consequences is generally given unselfish consideration. The effects of birth control drugs may well prove disastrous not only to present but to future generations as well.

However, even if there were no danger in the pills per se, they are still pernicious. It is the same school of thought that prescribes drugs as a remedy for overeating. Man must learn that nature intended food to satisfy hunger, not as a form of amusement. Likewise, nature planned sex for procreation. The laws of our creation cannot be violated with impunity. Overindulgence in sex leads to complete mental and physical bankruptcy. As I have said, what is on trial here is not birth control pills per se, but a perverted attitude towards life which necessitates such measures. Self-indulgence rather than self-restraint is the dominant aspect of our society. Rather than practice control and self-discipline, we prefer to search for new nostrums so we can delude ourselves that our God-given biological force of procreation can be corrupted into lustful pleasure-seeking without penalty.…

Sex and your heart

There is no simple answer as to how much sex is damaging to the heart.… [Various] studies agreed on several points:

1. The heartbeat of the men generally ran faster than that of the women.

2. The heart rate accelerated greatly during intercourse, as much as 100 beats in a sixty-second period.

3. Close to orgasm and during its height a large number of abnormal and skipped heartbeats showed up. These did not appear on the ECG later on when the volunteers engaged in nonsexual exercise.

4. Beginning with foreplay, the heart rate speeds up in uneven spurts, the blood pressure rises an average of 40 to 80 mm systolic and 20 to 50 mm diastolic, the respiratory rate increases sharply (in some instances both husband and wife had close to seventy breaths per minute at orgasm).

Physiologically, sex and exercise are opposite to each other in their effect on the body. The sex act is essentially catabolic (destructive metabolic action). Sexual stimulation causes the blood to become congested in the pelvic and reproductive organs of the body. Sexual intercourse entails the loss of vital fluids containing the most essential elements and hormones. Sex weakens the individual and places a strain on the heart.

Exercise is anabolic (constructive metabolic action). It entails bodily action which develops and maintains physical fitness. It is essential movement for keeping the muscles strong and healthy. Proper exercise benefits and strengthens all the vital organs, improves the blood circulation, and strengthens the heart muscles.…

In conclusion

The world is now influenced by materialistic tendencies which make a sensate life the end or object of living. Science is being used to seek out new techniques for mechanical, chemical, and surgical means of thwarting nature's purpose. There are those who seek to completely separate and unlink the sex act from its supreme purpose and consequence of reproduction of the species. They are announcing to the world that humanity is no longer capable of exercising voluntary control over copulation, which is the necessary act leading to the creation of another human being.

It is true that the sex act can, in fact has, become addictive, like alcohol and cigarettes; but by the same reasoning, it is also true that it can be curbed and brought under voluntary control. Man is capable of understanding that he is responsible for his actions; that the sex act is not always the most desirable and socially acceptable means he has at his disposal to express empathy and love for another human being; that it is not always necessary to resort to carnal sensuality. Self-discipline is an inherent quality all of us possess and it is entirely within our power to use it for self-realization.

Humanity must learn that the sex act is a serious matter with profound implications which do not affect just the two persons involved, but also affect the future of the human race. We must learn that copulation is not a toy to be used for entertainment or for lack of something better to do, but that it is a profound and meaningful act.…

I see the barbaric and cruel practice of raising animals for slaughter, birth control pills, abortion on demand, murder, war, gas chambers, and atomic annihilation as part of a sequence of events resulting from a denial of the universal principle that life is

sacred.

I only advocate temperance. All sex involves a sacrifice to the body. There is a price tag attached.

Whether or not it is worth the price is up to you!

Creation of the Superman

Dr. Raymond Bernard

Dr. Raymond Bernard was an American author of numerous esoteric and alternative research books, notably on health and diet. He passed away in 1965.

Part One–The Sexual Regeneration of Man: The Elixir of Life

Most of the great religions of the world were founded on one basic doctrine: the value of continence or chastity, usually exemplified in the immaculate sexual life–or rather non-sexual life–of their founders, which was supposed to serve as a model for their followers. In many instances, coupled with this doctrine was that of Parthenogenesis or Virgin Birth, a symbol of the creative life power of absolute sexual continence.

The thesis of this essay is based on a scientific conception of the physiological value of continence as a conservation of valuable sex hormones whose loss is depleting and harmful to body and brain and whose conservation is beneficial.

Dr. J. R. Brinkley, an eminent endocrinologist, expresses the physiological reasons for sex hormone conservation as follows: "I have not swerved from my original conception that the source of all human energy is sex energy, which is another way of saying that the glandular system of man is a chained system of series of connecting loops, mutually assisting or depressing each other. Their secretions, of which series the genital glands seem to have the power of most directly stimulating and in a measure dominating, the human body and mind by their particular kind of hormones. The hormones manufactured by the sex glands and distributed by the blood stream for the nourishment of all the tissues of the body."

An English physician, Dr. Knaggs, writes on this same subject: "Strict continence enables the essence of these sexual secretions to be reabsorbed into the body. This not only makes for health but also builds up those creative intellectual and intuitive faculties which show themselves in the work we do. Moreover, when we have learned to control this reproductive function, to turn inwards the mighty forces which it represents. We have solved one of the important problems of existence which bring us nearer to that superhuman stage to which we must ultimately attain."

The medieval alchemists were really endocrinologists and the Magnus Opum which they sought was not the artificial creation of gold out of lead but the sublimation and refinement of sexual energy which when denied a lower outlet, turned into higher brain power through the ascent of the Kundalini Force from the pelvis to the brain. The

conservation and transmutation of this vital force was their Elixir of Everlasting Youth and the secret of physical immortality for which they sought.

In our own day, modern physiologists have been engaged in a similar quest. Several decades ago, Brown-Sequards, the great French physiologist, put forward the assertion that the main cause of old age was a diminution in the quantity of absorbed seminal fluid (the internal sex secretion) present in the blood; and that its cure depended upon enriching the blood with this secretion.

If an old man may be temporarily rejuvenated by the implantation of the testicles of a goat or a monkey, surely he would have never grown so old if he had retained his own in a normal condition by a continent life. Senility, which is a product of sterility, or impotence, is an after-effect of persistent sexual indulgence. Weak genital glands, like any other weak part of the body, may be brought back to their normal state by the conservation of their secretions and by the purification of the blood through a natural diet.

Immortality is to be obtained right now, in the physical world, by hygienic and continent living. Resurrection is the transition from a mortal, decaying physiological state to an immortal, non-catabolic one. Most of us are walking around half dead. Four-fifths of our brain-cells are inactive as a result of having been poisoned by injurious foods. By rejuvenating the body through obedience to the laws of nature, we may be raised from the dead; we may be resurrected.

The disease of senility may be permanently cured. Death is not a sudden occurrence; it is the termination of a slow process of dying. This dying, or cellular disintegration, may commence at birth; it is hastened by eating decaying, dead food, and by losing seminal fluid. This fluid, when retained within the body, becomes the elixir of eternal youth.

When a man loses his seed in generation or sex-indulgence, he throws away his creative substance, and, in so doing, hastens death. He may not know the reason for the consciousness of the uncertainty of life, and the fear of death that is ever with him, but it is there, with the average, normal person, if he is honest and will admit it. This state of consciousness is caused by the loss of life... the life which should be retained within the body for its own health and increased vitality, and the strengthening of the mind.

The "punishment" for the waste of life-fluid is not an act of supernatural vengeance, but the physiological consequence of the loss of the power which animates the body. It does not occur suddenly, but gradually. This gradual dying, which we call old age, is the natural result of sex indulgence.

That old age is simply the product of weakened sex glands as a result of previous abuse, is proved by the following statements by Dr, Voronoft: "Decrepit old men are, in reality, eunuchs. They have been emasculated… I have never known a eunuch to exceed the age of sixty."

"Well before death they have the appearance of old men, and from this one might be tempted to attribute a very advanced age to them, but this would be a pure illusion. They have every appearance of being effectively aged: dry skin, bloated body, dull eyes.

They have a stooping gait which gives one the impression that they are centenarians."

"Their death seems to be the normal end of old age, but verification of the facts usually indicates that they died when between fifty and sixty years of age. Their aspect is the outcome of the fact that, deprived of the essential factor of youth and vigor, they have prematurely aged and have died well before the term ordinarily attained by normal men."

"Thus, then, the lack of the internal secretions from the sexual glands shortens life. It could not be otherwise; it is unthinkable that a body deprived of the organs the suppression of which renders the blood poor, the bones frail, the muscles feebler, fat more abundant, nutrition imperfect, should not suffer a general enfeeblement, become more vulnerable and less able to struggle against the causes which always bring about death well before the normal physiological time."

"It may be affirmed then, that deprivation of the interstitial glands internal secretion accelerates the advent of old age and shortens life. On the other hand, the maintenance of this source of vital energy is the best guarantee of longevity. Men who are endowed with active interstitial glands and in whom the functioning of these glands is not extinguished, lived to be very old."

Part Two–The Physiological Sublimation of Sex-Energy

Undeveloped men and women believe that sex is a plaything, something which has no other purpose than to afford them amusement. But developed men and women know that this creative power has far more important uses than merely to be wasted in thoughtless indulgence.

The sex glands are the engines of the human body, the generators of organic energy. This energy, if conserved, may become the motive power behind all accomplishments in life.

The popular idea that most geniuses led immoral lives is false... as a study of their biographies proves. The reverse is rather the case, for creative ability, whether along artistic or intellectual lines, is a sublimated expression of the same vital energy which the average individual usually dissipates through sexual channels.

Therefore, the supermen and the great geniuses of the past invariably led strictly continent lives. The few talented individuals who did not may not be classed among the spiritually highest. Their work lacks a certain subtle quality, which is present in a Beethoven symphony or in a painting by Leonardo da Vinci, that only results from a sublimation of sex-energy.

Apollonius of Tyana (who, at the age of twenty) said, "I am resolved never to marry, and to abstain from the company of all women whatsoever."

The following celebrated individuals led strictly chaste lives: John the Baptist and Jesus, greatest of prophets; Hypatia, Thomas a Kempis, St. Catherine of Siena, St.

Theresa of Avila, Joan of Arc and Savonarola, greatest of mystics and martyrs; Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinus, Francis Bacon, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Locke, Pascal and Kant, greatest of philosophers, Newton, greatest of scientists; Handel and Beethoven, greatest of composers; and Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael, greatest of painters.

The following great men lived continently during the creative period of their lives; Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, St. Paul, Plutarch, St. Augustine; Dante, St. Francis, Erasmus, Descartes, Diderot, Milton, and Schopenhauer.

The chastity of the supermen is due not only to spiritual and ethical principles, but also to physiological reasons which constitute a body of physiological facts which deal with the origin and transformations of vital energy, and with the intimate relationship existing between the genital glands and the lymphatic, vascular and nervous systems.

The human body is like a dynamo which draws its electric power, directly from the ether. Through lung and skin respiration, etheric power is absorbed into the body, collecting at the Solar Plexus, the battery of the sympathetic nervous system. From here, this electric energy (the Life-Force) passes to the sex glands where, in combination with elements derived from the blood, it condenses into seminal fluid. It is through this secretion that vital energy is conveyed to the various ductless glands, nerve-centers and organs of the body.

From the Ovaries (in the male, the testicles), the sex secretion is carried by the Oviducts (in the male, the vas deferens) to the Uterus (in the male, the seminal vesicles). The latter organ, which acts as a seminal receptacle, is surrounded and permeated by a network of lymphatic vessels which absorb and draw up sexual fluid as quickly as it is being formed (in both sexes).

This lymphatically absorbed seminal fluid is then collected at the Receptaculum Chyli, from where it is sent up, through the Thoracic duct into the Left Subclavian Vein as it enters the heart. Thus it vitalizes the blood, giving it the capacity to transform inert food material into living tissue, and being carried by it to all parts of the body.

Through the Carotid Artery, the transmuted sex secretion is carried up by the blood to the brain, to nourish and energize its cells. In the Choroid Plexus of the Third Cerebral Ventricle, and in the Pituitary Body, it is transformed into cerebro-spinal fluid and pituitrin, which flow through the cavity of the brain and spine, generating nerve-electricity.

It is for this reason that a persistent loss of seminal fluid, by causing a reduction in the quantity and concentration of cerebro-spinal fluid, produces a devitalized condition of the nervous system, which we call "neurasthenia." Such consequences follow birth control practices.

Each night, during sleep, a new daily supply of cerebro-spinal fluid is manufactured. Energy absorbed from the ether by the sympathetic nervous system (whose nerve-endings in the skin consist of minute mouths, which rhythmically open and close) is conveyed through the medium of the sex secretion to the central nervous system, which is then electrically recharged.

When this stored energy in the cerebro-spinal fluid, after the day's activities, is

again expended, a condition of drowsiness, or a desire for sleep, ensues. It normally requires from three to five hours for this recharging of the central nervous system to take place. One should then immediately arise, for excessive sleep might cause the newly generated energy to be dissipated (through the uncontrolled cerebral activity of dreams).

It is through the medium of the sex secretion that the elements required for the nourishment of the cells of the brain and the nerves are transformed; from their raw state, as obtained from food, to the vitalized condition in which they may be incorporated into nervous tissue. The sex glands are centers of phosphorus-metabolism; they extract raw phosphorus from assimilated food, chemically transforming it (as their secretion), so that it may be absorbed and utilized by brain cells.

If any of this vital fluid escapes (voluntarily or involuntarily), the blood is drained of phosphorus, and the brain is deprived of its nourishment. Every drop of seminal fluid that is lost from the body brings disease, nervous derangement, mental decline, old age and death so much nearer to us.

Until this loss of vital energy (in the female, the discharge of vaginal and uterine secretions, which is especially pronounced at the beginning and at the end of menstruation) is inhibited, one is like a leaking vessel, continually losing the "Water of Life," and, therefore, slowly dying. A seminal emission is the escape of incipient brain-tissue.

Physiologists formerly thought that there were two separate sex secretions, an internal one, produced by the interstitial cells, and an external one, produced by the reproductive glands. This, however, was a false assumption... for the secretions of the genital glands (including the glands of the uterus and the seminal vesicles in addition to the ovaries and the testicles) constitute an indissoluble unit, all elements of which are continually being generated and lymphatically absorbed.

Spermatozoa and ova are not produced at rare intervals, when required for reproductive purposes, but continuously. They are absorbed by lymphatic's into the blood stream, having an internal function to perform.

Any escape of seminal fluid involves a loss of the "internal secretion," which is nothing else than what has been called the "external secretion" when it is conserved, absorbed and physiologically utilized. There is really only one sex secretion, which is an internal secretion, the so called external one being nothing else than a pathological escape of this.

Dr. Brinkley, the endocrinologist, says: "It is briefly my view that both the external and internal secretions of the gonads (sex glands collectively) are equally valuable to the building up of body tissues, and that the gonads themselves are not merely a link in the chain of the endocrines."

"The gonads in the chain of the endocrines is the master position, and ... the well-being of all the endocrines is exactly dependent upon the well-being of the gonads. Defective thyroid glands can be most easily repaired by repair of the gonads, and so with all the glands of the chain."

The thyroid, pituitary and pineal glands, which are intimately related to the mental and spiritual life of the individual, are directly activated by the absorbed sex fluid carried to them by the blood. There is an intimate interdependence between the genital and the thyroid glands, as there is between the latter and the brain.

A small thyroid secretion results in the development of a cretin, an idiotic dwarf... even as a diminished sex secretion produces a eunuch, an individual who is physically and mentally undeveloped.

At puberty, when a greater amount of sex secretion is sent into the blood, there is an increase thyroid secretion, accompanied by a rapid physical and mental development. On the other hand, when the sex secretion is lessened, as during senility, the thyroids shrivel, and a degeneration of body and mind results.

Dr. Voronoff writes: "No organ can preserve its vital energy and function to full capacity if its cells are not stimulated and vivified by the genital glands internal secretion."

"Eunuchs furnish a very clear demonstration of this. All their organs are like those of the rest of humanity, with one exception. Deprivation of this one organ depresses, weakens the functioning of all the others and brings on premature old age."

"The removal of these organs reacts as much on the brain as on the heart, the muscles, the bones and all the other organs. The moral and physical energies both diminish. Abelard, the brilliant poet, never wrote a line after he was emasculated."

Dr. Nicholas says: "It is a medical and physiological fact that the best blood of the body goes to form the elements of reproduction in both sexes."

"In a pure and orderly life this material is reabsorbed. It goes back into the circulation ready to form the finest brain, nerve and muscle tissue. This life of man carried back and diffused through his system, makes him manly, strong, brave and heroic."

"The suspension of the use of the generative organs is attended with a notable increase of bodily and mental vigor and spiritual life. Nature finds another use for the unexpended sexual energy in employing it for the building up of a keener brain, and more vital and enduring nerves and muscles."

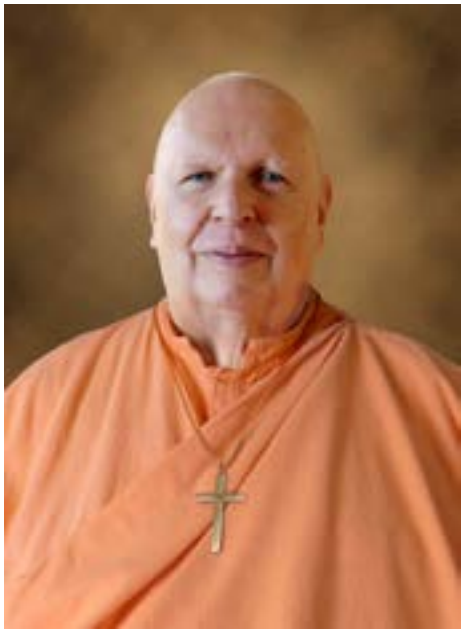
"In the genital glands of animals and men there are secreted powerful and subtle chemical elements... absorbed into the blood and thence carried to all parts of the organism to energize, invigorate and strengthen the cells, organs and parts of the body... including the brain and nervous system. Some have gone so far as to hazard the opinion that old age is chiefly due to a lessening of the supply of these secretions."

Nature has ordained that all the secretions of the sex glands, in both male and female, be forever retained within the body, just as are the secretions of the other ductless glands. The sex glands are the only endocrine glands whose secretions may escape; and we must look here for the fundamental cause of glandular derangements with their accompanying pathological symptoms.

The normal development and well-being of body, mind and soul directly depends upon this absorbed sex fluid; and that is why an absolutely chaste life is the only healthy, natural and creative one.

Moses said, “If any man’s seed of copulation go out from him, then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until even.”

About the Author



Swami Nirmalananda Giri (Abbot George Burke) is the founder and director of the Light of the Spirit Monastery (Atma Jyoti Ashram) in Cedar Crest, New Mexico, USA.

In his many pilgrimages to India, he had the opportunity of meeting some of India's greatest spiritual figures, including Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh and Anandamayi Ma. During his first trip to India he was made a member of the ancient Swami Order by Swami Vidyananda Giri, a direct disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda, who had himself been given sannyas by the Shankaracharya of Puri, Jagadguru Bharati Krishna Tirtha.

In the United States he also encountered various Christian saints, including Saint John Maximovich of San Francisco and Saint Philaret Voznesensky of New York. He was ordained in the Liberal Catholic Church (International) to the priesthood on January 25, 1974, and consecrated a bishop on August 23, 1975.

For many years Abbot George has researched the identity of Jesus Christ and his teachings with India and Sanatana Dharma, including Yoga. It is his conclusion that Jesus lived in India for most of his life, and was a yogi and Sanatana Dharma missionary to the West. After his resurrection he returned to India and lived the rest of his life in the Himalayas.

He has written extensively on these and other topics, many of which are posted at OCOY.org.

Atma Jyoti Ashram (Light of the Spirit Monastery)

Atma Jyoti Ashram is an esoteric Christian monastic community for those men who seek direct experience of the Spirit through meditation, sacramental worship, discipline and dedicated communal life, emphasizing the inner reality of "Christ in you the hope of glory," as taught by the illumined mystics of East and West.

The public outreach of the monastery is through its website, OCOY.org (Original Christianity and Original Yoga).There you will find many articles on Original Christianity and Original Yoga, including *Esoteric Christian Beliefs*. *Foundations of Yoga* and *How to Be a Yogi* are practical guides for anyone seriously interested in living the Yoga Life.

You will also discover many other articles on leading an effective spiritual life, including *The Yoga of the Sacraments* and *Spiritual Benefits of a Vegetarian Diet*, as well as the "Dharma for Awakening" series–in-depth commentaries on these spiritual classics: the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Dhammapada, and the Tao Teh King.

You can listen to podcasts by Abbot George on meditation, the Yoga Life, and remarkable spiritual people he has met in India and elsewhere, at http://ocoy.org/podcasts/

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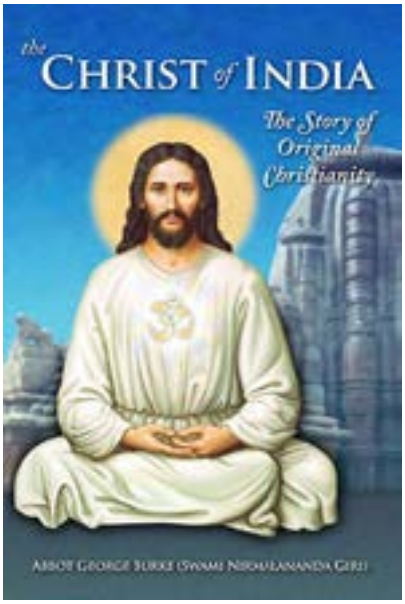

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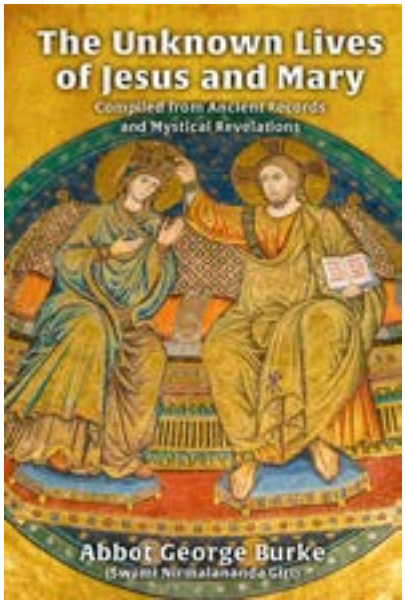
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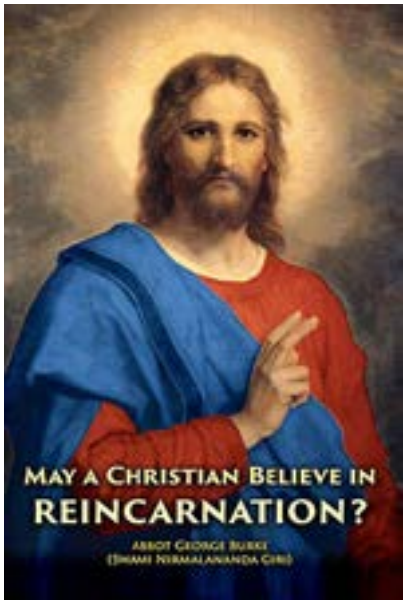

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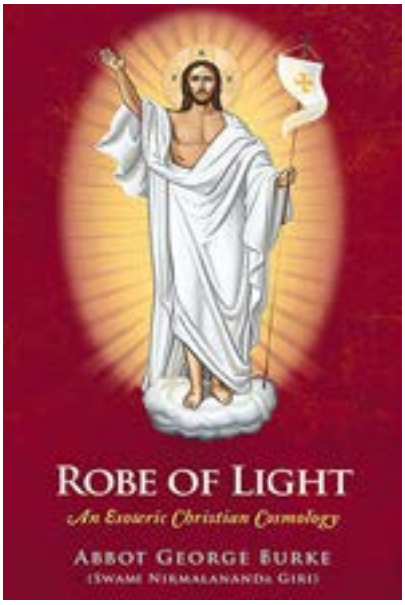

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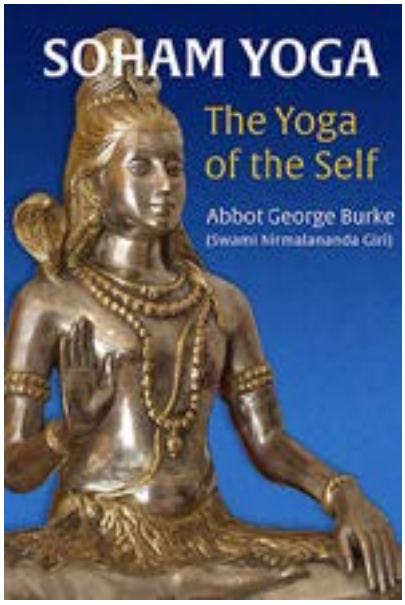

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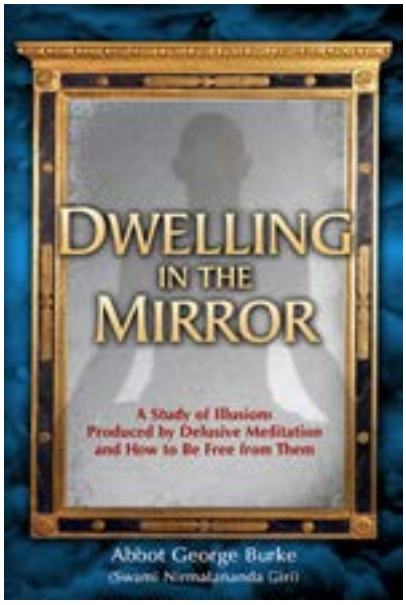
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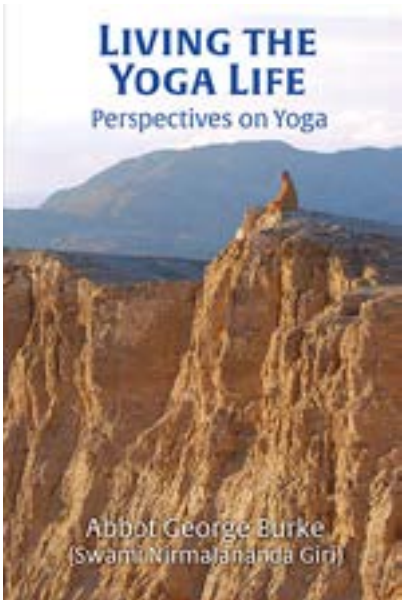

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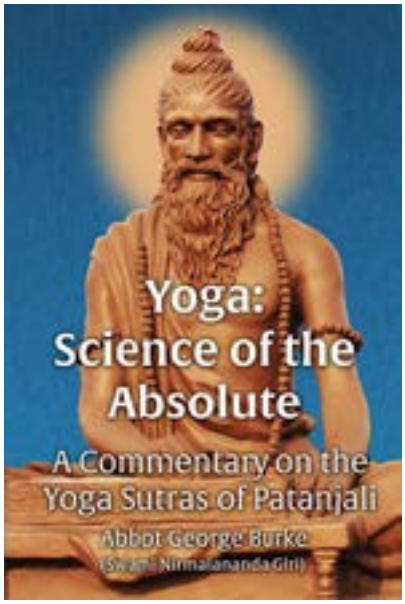

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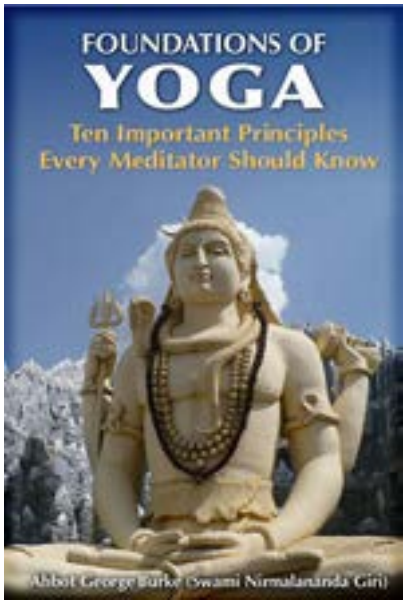

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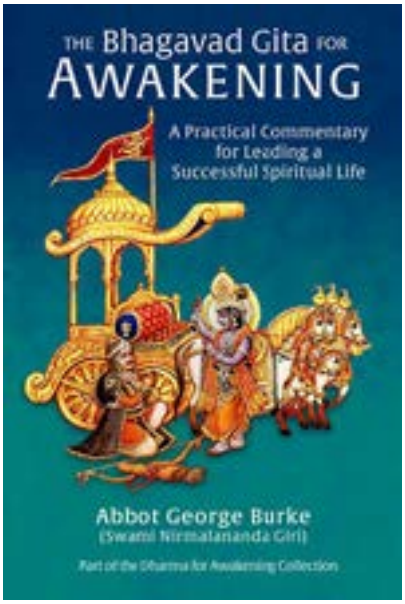

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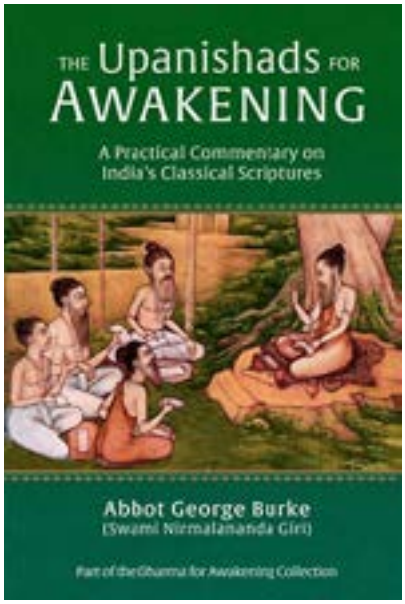

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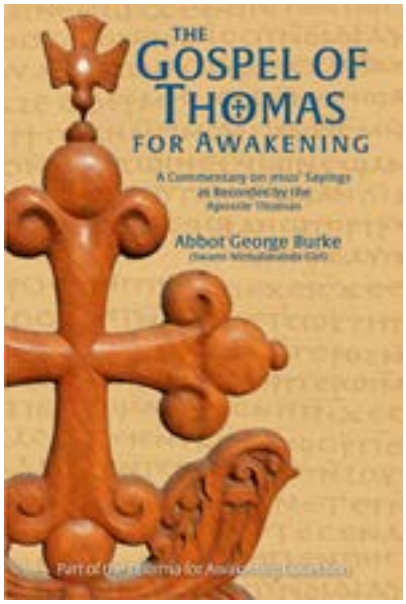

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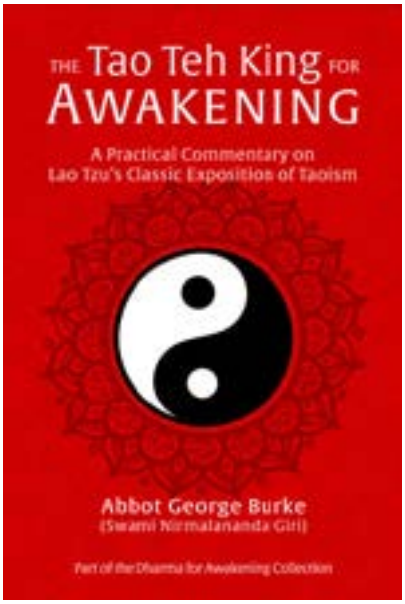

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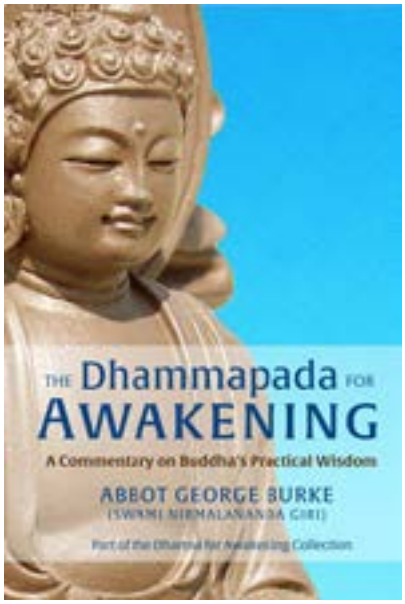

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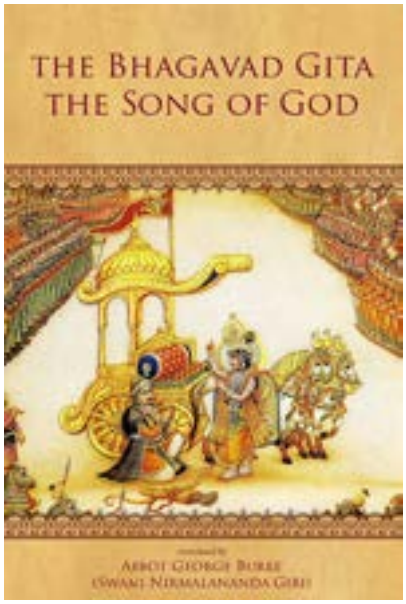

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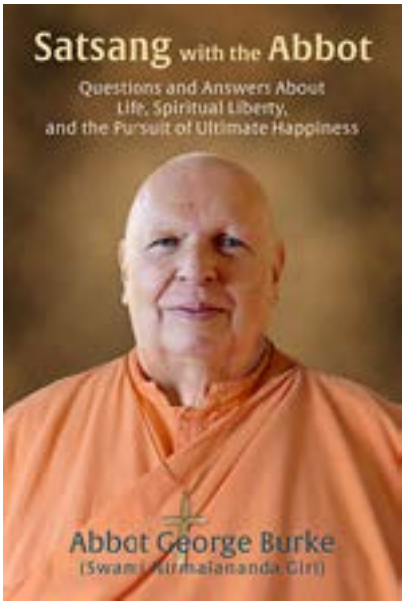
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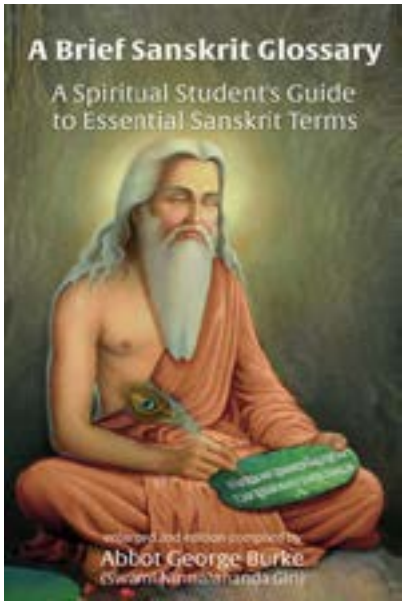

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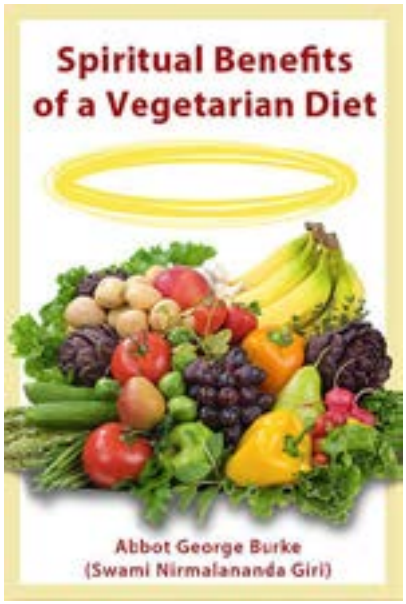

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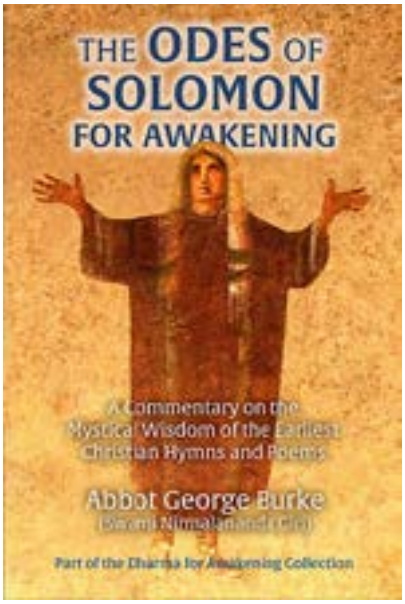
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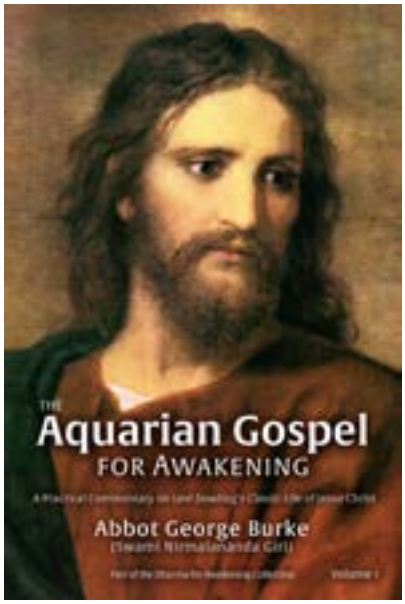

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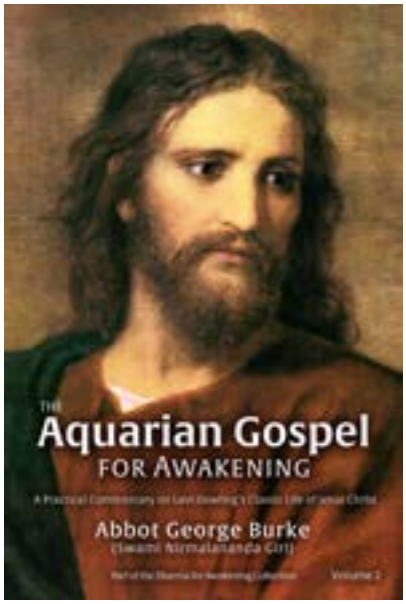

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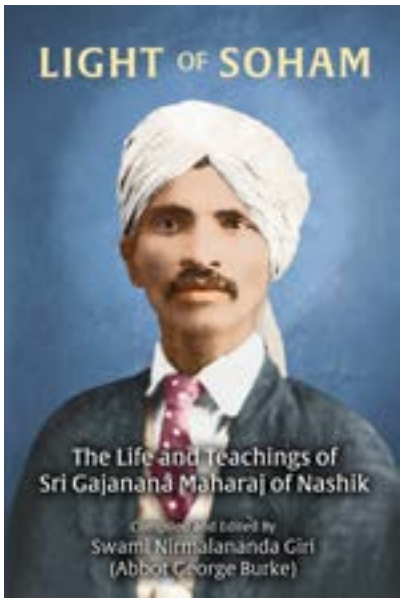

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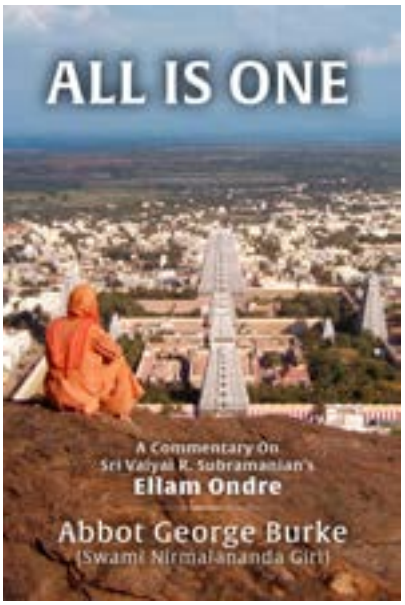

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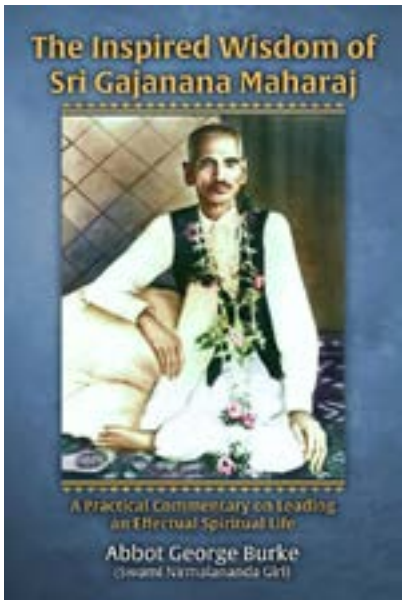
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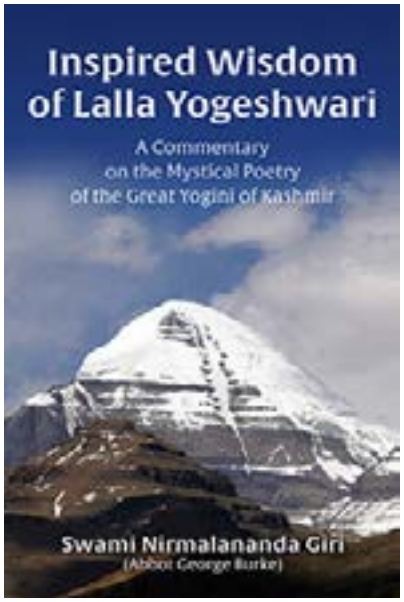

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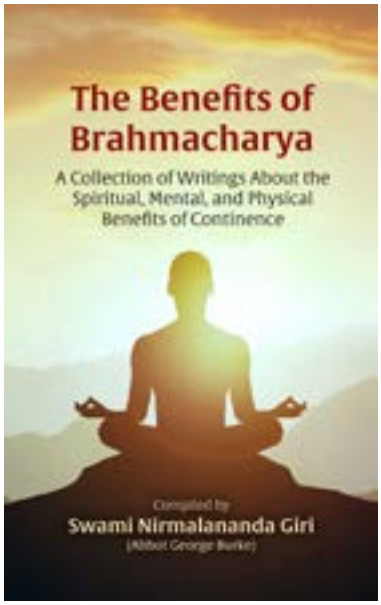

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